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MEMOIRS

OF

MY OWN TIMES.

BY

GENERAL JAMES WILKINSON.

——— Remember that the ways of Heaven,
Though dark, are just: that oft some guardian power,
Attends unseen, to save the innocent!
But if high Heaven decrees our fall—O let us
Firmly await the stroke; prepared alike
To live or die.

BROWN'S BARBAROSSA.

For patriots still must fall for statesmen's safety,
And perish by the country they preserve.

SAVAGE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRINTED BY ABRAHAM SMALL.
1816.

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DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO WIT:

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the fifth day of February, in the forty-first year of the Independence of the [SEAL.] United States of America, A. D. 1817, General James Wilkinson, of the said District, hath deposited in this Office the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Author, in the words following, to wit:

"Memoirs of my own Times. By General James Wilkinson.

——— Remember that the ways of Heaven,
Though dark, are just: that oft some guardian power,
Attends unseen, to save the innocent!
But if high Heaven decrees our fall—O let us
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SAVAGE.

In three Volumes."

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, intituled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned:" And also to the act, entitled, "An act supplementary to an act, entitled, 'An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned," and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

D. CALDWELL,
Clerk of the District of Pennsylvania.

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TO THE

CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES.

AFTER the faithful devotion of the best faculties of my youth and my age, to the service of our common country; and after the cruel persecutions I have suffered in your name, but without your authority, to gratify personal revenge, and promote the sinister policy of wicked and ambitious men; as a testimony of my unimpaired confidence in that justice and magnanimity, which never errs except when deceived, these Memoirs are respectfully dedicated, by

Your fellow man,
and fellow citizen,
JAMES WILKINSON.

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INTRODUCTION.

THESE Memoirs are offered to the indulgent consideration of the reader, with no other apology for their imperfections, than the assurance, that they must be attributed rather to a want of competent powers than a failure of zeal in their author.

Military, more than any other class of, men are exposed to the jealousy, resentment, or caprice of rulers. Remote from the scenes, where power and influence struggle against each other for superiority, they are frequently resorted to, as the sacrifices necessary to conceal the intrigues or incapacity of a cabinet; under strong excitements the imagination too often usurps the province of reason, and expectation, however tinged with extravagance, must to a certain extent be satisfied, or disappointment, and in some instances reprobation, will be the consequences; a sacrifice must be made to appease popular clamour, and he who plans or he who executes must fall. The minister is protected by executive patronage, and the general of consequence is selected as the convenient victim.

The intentions, the integrity, and independence of my pen will, I hope, defend its humble productions from the unmerited fate of its persecuted master. I am, however, sensible, that the anticipations excited by these Memoirs, may be unpropitious to their effect, interspersed even as they are with public documents and official correspondence of interesting character; yet I do promise myself that the transactions, anecdotes, facts, and reflections, which I record, will not be deemed altogether unworthy the attention of the citizen, the soldier, the patriot, and the statesman.

The motives which gave birth to these Memoirs are set forth in the first chapter of this volume. To exhibit

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to his countrymen a fellow citizen (such as he has been, and such as he now is) of whom they have heard much and known little; who has been persecuted for his services, and has served for his persecutions; to explain and vindicate the conduct of an individual, who is not conscious that he has wronged a fellow man, or omitted any occasion, within his circumscribed sphere, to discharge his duty to his neighbour, and to his country, with zeal and fidelity.

Such are the chief inducements which determined me, in the eve of a life which has been devoted to the public service, to undertake a task for which I was ill qualified by habit or education; but in entering on what I considered a paramount obligation, I resolved to avail myself of the latitude peculiar to Memoirs, to save from oblivion the details of several incidents and occurrences, relative to public men and measures, confined to my own breast, or within the knowledge of a few surviving revolutionary associates.

At the time I commenced the work, my ideas of typographical measure was so imperfect, that I conceived 1500 pages octavo would furnish ample scope for the range I had assigned to my pen; but my manuscripts were then chiefly in New Orleans, and they did not come to hand until February last; a glance at the mass of forty years growth removed my delusion, and after printing more than two thousand three hundred pages, setting aside the illustration of my persecutions, which unfortunately have occupied a large space, I have not been able to touch the last twenty-five years of my public services, which embrace the most interesting and important scenes of my life, pending the administration of Presidents WASHINGTON, ADAMS, and JEFFERSON, and comprehend the four years Indian war, in which I was actively and incessantly engaged. The occupancy of the lower Mississippi: conferences and treaties, with all the Indian nations, within the limits of the United States, from the Saut de St. Marie and La Prairie des Chiens to the

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Creek nation: the reception of the province of Louisiana from the French Prefect Laussat, under the purchase of 1803; accompanied by circumstances little understood: my government of Upper Louisiana: our difference and accommodation with the Spaniards in the quarter of the Sabine: Colonel Burr's conspiracy; and a variety of subordinate occurrences: during which period I made eight voyages by sea, descended the Mississippi four times, and traversed a trackless wilderness four times, from the borders of Louisiana to the frontiers of Georgia, through the Choctaw and Creek nations; having travelled on public service in the years 1802—3, through forests, and by inland navigation, more than 16,000 miles.

I tender this explanation to the reader to illustrate the causes of the incompleteness of this work, as the official correspondence and original manuscripts in my possession, could not be comprised in less than three additional volumes of the size of those now published. The exhibition of these documents is due to my character, and will not be uninteresting to the public. It is therefore my purpose, should my life and health be spared by a beneficent Creator, to avail myself of the interval of repose from more necessary labours, to continue these Memoirs, in as regular a series of events as may comport with a proper connexion and a clear exposition of the several topics on which I propose to treat; until I have exhausted the most interesting incidents of the revolutionary and Indian wars, and of subsequent public events, down to the late peace.

The freedom with which I have treated President Madison, may be imputed rather to disappointed ambition and personal resentment, than a sense of political obligation; and I confess the magnitude and notoriety of the wrongs I have received from him, and by his authority, furnish strong grounds for this suspicion; yet if that faithful monitor, which speaks within, has not deceived me, I may conscientiously deny the imputation; for if

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I have on the severest scrutiny of my breast discovered any resentment to the man, I declare it to be of that kind of evanescent pain which leaves no sting behind; personally, I from my heart acknowledge myself obliged to him, because his persecutions have taught me humility, and his attempt to wound my pride and impoverish my old age, has furnished me leisure to turn my thoughts to duties too often neglected, and, as far as may be allowed to frail man, to prepare myself for that awful moment, which is to determine my fate for ever more. No! I disclaim personal resentment, but will acknowledge that I do most ardently detest the vices of the man, and although the exposition of his character and conduct was indispensible to the vindication of my own, candor requires I should acknowledge an additional motive, in a sense of duty to my country, under the most solemn conviction that he unites in his character the tyrannical disposition and cold hypocrisy of Tiberius, without either his energy or partial respect for justice; that he has professed principles in which he had no faith, to effect popular delusion for the accomplishment of his ambitious views: I consider him an enemy to the constitution, which he professed to admire, and swore to support, treating his oath with disregard, and his early professions with indifference: I verily believe he has laid the foundation of a monied aristocracy in these states, and fostered a spirit of official speculation, which tends to subvert the principle and spirit of the government: and that he is desirous to give force and effect to these measures, by the undue extension of executive influence, and the increase of a standing army.

These conclusions rest upon about twenty years observation, and are supported by the opinion of gentlemen who have had more frequent and favourable opportunities of knowing Mr. Madison than myself. But if it be fair to judge occult characters by the indiscretion of their confidents, then President Madison may be suspected by

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his warmest advocates of sentiments hostile to republican institutions. The facts have not been sufficiently matured, but I have strong reasons for belief that circumstances may, ere long occur, to justify the revelation of political heresies avowed by a gentleman into whose hands President Madison not long since surrendered himself and the executive functions. I scorn dark inuendoes, and therefore will declare, that the copies of certain manuscripts now before me, the originals of which I am promised, satisfy my judgment, that, but for the providence of God, which dissolved a pernicious association, these states would have been visited by calamities of which the public have no conception.

If I have in the explanation of misrepresentations, the repulsion of wrongs, and the exposition of injuries, which the perusal of these volumes will assure the reader are not affected, strictured the conduct of secret assassins, or open enemies with severity, let it be ascribed to the sensibility of a man of honour, barbarously and wantonly aspersed; and should names sometimes appear to be introduced unnecessarily, the exposition has been imposed on me by the unity of circumstances undesired and unsought for on my part.

Military reflections were inseparable from the subjects which occupied my pen, and I have occasionally extended them with views to the information of the youthful soldier; for although we have an army, and a considerable portion of inestimable worth, incorporated with much deleterious matter, yet, the great principles of the profession are imperfectly understood. In speaking irreverently of the war department, I have yielded to an irresistible impulse, produced by the miserable mismanagement of that *bureau*, which, instead of being confined to the great and important provisions, indispensable to the salutary conduct of the various branches of military service, has been converted into a broker's shop, in which commissions are commuted for congressional subserviency,

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and an office of petty details to pamper the vanity of the incumbent, to blazon official importance, and advance a system of disgraceful intrigue in and out of the army, whilst the ordnance, clothing, subsistence, inspectors, quarter-masters, hospital, and pay departments, are subjects little understood; nor can an accurate, comprehensive knowledge of those departments, be acquired but by education and experience, backed by attention and diligence. The pay department, *if possible*, the most defective and the most corrupt of all, I make no reference to the amiable, virtuous and respectable gentleman* at its head or his *bureau*; it was deranged by General Knox in a moment of personal favouritism, about twenty-five years since, and we seem to have lost the art, however simple, to cure the defects, which would save an hundred thousand dollars expense, and would produce incredible effects on the morals, manners, police, discipline, comfort, and health of the troops, subjects little understood, and perhaps less regarded; under existing ordinances and arrangements, the commanding officers of companies neither can nor ought to be strictly responsible for the fitness of their men in the various, moral, and physical relations to the service.

Should I be condemned for the unreserved liberty with which I have treated public men, measures, and institutions, I must seek justification under the most distinguished writer of antiquity, who says, "It is the first law of history that the writer should neither dare to advance what is false, nor to suppress what is true; that he should relate the facts with strict impartiality, free from ill will or favour; that his narrative should distinguish the order of time, and, when necessary, give the description of places; that he should unfold the states-

* Mr. Robert Brent, who conducts the office under the forms in which he received it, with unquestionable integrity and marked accommodation.

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man's motives, and in his accounts of the transactions and events, interpose his own judgment; and should not only relate what was done, but how it was done, and what share chance, or rashness, or prudence had in the issue: that he should give the characters of the leading men, their weight and influence, their passions, their principles, and conduct through life."* I had determined to fulfil these injunctions of the Roman patriot, but found my purpose arrested at the threshold by love of country, and the respect which is due to the honourable descendants of departed impostors; and when the passions, principles, and conduct through life, of many men who occupy military and civil stations, were presented as proper subjects for my pen, it dropped from my hand.

The political reflections which are scattered over these sheets, have been forced upon my mind by the unavoidable contrast of times past and present, and the rapid decline of the government, from the simplicity, purity, economy, and integrity, with which it has been administered within my knowledge; and if I have manifested a strong repugnance to the encouragement of a military spirit, the *augmentation* of a standing army, and the maintenance of a cumbrous, expensive, useless staff, it is because such institutions tend to foster a spirit of ambition and military glory, incompatible with free governments; means produce ends; *a large disciplined army and vaults filled with crowns, bequeathed by the iron-hearted* FREDERICK WILLIAM *to his son* FREDERICK *the Great, produced the first Silesian war;* and so it will be with the United States under similar circumstances, if the prevailing spirit of the times is indulged; for with a greater extent of territory than is favourable to the genius of our government, the Canadas and Floridas have become objects of political cupidity; and this thirst for dominion and our commercial rapacity, if not seasonably restrain-

* Cicero, Oration, Book II. Sec. lxii. lxiii.

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ed, will prematurely destroy our peace, our prosperity, and reputation.* The result of the late war has been so flattering to the power and the ambition of the executive department of the government, and so intoxicating to a great body of the community, that another will become acceptable, as soon as we have taken breath; and yet every person with the slightest knowledge in military affairs must know, that if we do not preserve the peace of the country, we must at no distant day part with the palladium of our civil rights; promptitude, secrecy, and the sudden blow, constitute the soul of military enterprise; these belong to the governments of the old world; whilst the constitution of these free states imperiously require deliberation, caution, and publicity, in the proceedings of their governments; and it inevitably follows that all military measures must be shackled with pernicious uncertainty and delay. The disadvantages are too manifest on the side of the United States, to escape the observation of the most ignorant, and when public calamities press, the public mind is prepared to make every sacrifice for the national safety; means without respect to the end are sought for, and away goes the constitution, to extend the power and strengthen the hands of the executive, and thus the very patriotism of the country is employed to subvert its own free government; for we have proofs before our eyes, of the reluctance with which power, once acquired, is renounced by those who enjoy it.

Military glory! fascinating sound! bewitching subject! but who profits by the acquisition? the nation! no, but those who live and feed on the nation. War, which

* I hear of an attempted negociation for an island in the Mediterranean; an insular possession for the American republic, in such a remote quarter, appears so romantic, that I must doubt the fact; yet, the report warrants the inquiry, which should not be neglected; because, if it be well founded, those whom it interests may have an opportunity to examine the policy of the proposition.

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subsists on the blood and treasure of the people, forms the aliment of this alluring dame, glory, and is utterly destructive of national happiness, which depends on peace and tranquillity. I must not therefore be blamed for indulging a transient reflection upon these alternatives, which are as opposite in their nature as the poles. The fate and fortunes of all countries in all ages, will bear testimony in favour of my position, from remotest times down to the late transcendant glory of France, and the present deplorable condition of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, whose government has reached the pinnacle of military fame, whilst its ill-fated subjects are plunged into the abyss of wretchedness.

Military glory! It has become the favourite theme of our public councils, and the dominant passion of the rising generation, whilst national happiness, neglected and forgotten, has ceased to be an object of inquiry, and is sinking into oblivion, under the pressure of luxury, avarice, ambition and vain glory.

Yet the following contrast is so striking and impressive, that I flatter myself it may rouse the most lethargic, before it be too late:

The companions of Military glory, are—	*The attendants on pacific policy, are—*
Wars,	Security,
Armies,	Agriculture,
Immorality,	Religion,
Vice,	Virtue,
Prodigality,	Economy,
Battles,	Ease and content,
Human slaughter,	Domestic security,
Exactions,	Taxes on luxury,
Public debts,	An overflowing treasury,
Embargoes,	Commerce,
Penury,	Riches,
Famine,	Abundance,
Pestilence,	Health,
Widows and orphans.	A smiling progeny.

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This contrast is neither strained nor affected; it is drawn from nature, and does not exhibit an hundredth part of the heart-rending horrors of war, nor the divine blessings and tranquil enjoyments of peace. Of these truths we have abundant proofs in our own times, and in our country; with the good and the ill before them, I implore heaven so to direct the councils of the country, as long, very long to save it from the SCOURGE of nations; and I will close these reflections with an applicable quotation from the writing of the sage, the patriot, and the Christian, John Dickinson, a citizen as eminent for wisdom, as he was conspicuous for private and social virtues.

"It is a mournful but instructive study to read the history of mankind. There we see their follies and their vices depicted at full length, accompanied by their miserable attendants. The prominent feature is an aptitude to plunge into wars—

> "For man, too haughty in a prosperous state,
> "Is blind, and heedless to his future state."

"A child may set fire to a house, but a whole city may not be able to prevent the conflagration from levelling the buildings in every street to the ground: "*Ruant omnes in sanguinem suam populi obstinatæque peritatis pœnas nunc sponte persolvunt*"—"All nations rush forward to the effusion of their own blood, and voluntarily pay the penalties of their obstinate fierceness."

It is an observation of antiquity, that "*they* are *happy* who grow *wise* by the misfortunes of *others*." This direction has been too little respected; and men generally choose "to grow *wise* by *their own* misfortunes." But as truth is never the worse for being long neglected, I hope and trust that my beloved countrymen will exert the good sense they eminently possess, and stand upon the guard of *prudence* and *affection* for *themselves* and their *posterity*.

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My name attaches responsibility to the works of my pen, which I shall explain or defend against the animadversions of known characters; and if I have been so unfortunate as to have done injustice to any person, I shall proudly acknowledge the error, and abase myself to the most implacable of my enemies; but I must be permitted to treat anonymous comments or newspaper pasquinades as I have hitherto done, with silent indifference.

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MEMOIRS

BY

GENERAL WILKINSON.

CHAPTER I.

Preliminary Observations.—Motives for writing memoirs. Summary of General Wilkinson's principles.—His satisfaction with his country.—Consummation of a series of wrongs ascribed to President Madison.—Temper and principles unchanged by the vicissitudes of life.—His birth.—A brief account of his ancestors.—Loss of his father.—Caprice of fortune.—Some account of General Wilkinson's relatives, and a glance at the state of society in 1768.—*First excursion from home; the sensations it produced; is relieved by the effects of novelty.—Diminutive size of Baltimore in* 1770.—*Local attachments dissolved.—His education.—He arrives at Philadelphia, where he first sees a man under arms.—The impressions which it produced.—Effects of social intercourse on the morals, &c. of individuals.—General Gage's enterprise against the town of Concord, Massachusetts.—Its effects on the citizens of Philadelphia.—General Wilkinson takes a decisive part in the revolution.—The siege of Boston.—The state of moral feeling in* 1775 *contrasted with* 1816.—*Good effects of the resolution displayed by the provincials, on the* 17*th*

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CHAP. I.

June, 1775.—Apathy and inaction of the British commander.—Comparative strength of the adverse forces.—Comparative influence of discipline and numbers, in military operations.—Effects of the battle of Breed's Hill.—Power of the enemy.—His exertions would have affected the American cause.—American council of war fortunately rejects the proposition to attack Boston.—Letters of General Washington and General Greene.—Conduct of the British general contrasted with that of the American.—Possession of Dorchester Heights, and consequences.—The author appointed Captain.—Enemy evacuates Boston.—Sketch of Breed's hill and the ruins of Charlestown.—First visit to Boston.—General Washington enters Boston.—Captain Wilkinson proceeds with General Greene for New York.—Anecdote of Lord Howe.—Incident respecting Lieutenant Grover.—Reflections on military promotion.—On dismission from service, without accusation or trial.—On the recent conduct of Mr. Madison.—On the population and improvements of the country, and the progress of the government.—Appeal to the vigilance and integrity of the people.—Ordered to Canada.—Arrives at Albany—at Lake George—at St. John's.—Joins Arnold at La Chine.—Threatened by the British major, Foster, who had taken the post at the Cedars.—Letter to General Greene, transmitted to Congress by General Washington.—Foster retreats, and is pursued.——Conduct of Arnold at Fort St. Ann.—Convention with Foster.—Returns to Montreal, and leaves Colonel De Haas in command.—De Haas disobeys orders, and returns to Montreal.—Captain Wilkinson appointed aid-de-camp to Arnold.—Disobeys Arnold's order to seize the goods of the merchants of Montreal.—Despatched to Sorel.—Meets General Carleton with the British army at Varennes.—Warns Arnold of his danger.—Ordered to Chamblée.—Condition in which he finds the army.—Arnold retreats by La Prairie.—General Sullivan's alarm upon the appearance of Colonel Wayne's detachment.—Army arrives at St. John's.—General Arnold and Captain Wil-

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kinson reconnoitre the road to Chamblée, and fall in with the British advance.—Retreat and arrivé at the Isle aux Noix.—Miraculous escape of the army. Reflections on the conduct of Sir Guy Carleton, and the operations of the British army.—The probable result of a different conduct. —General Washington's apprehensions for the Canadian army.—Dishonourable conduct of General Arnold.—Captain Wilkinson retires from General Arnold's family.

CHAP. I.

Some explanation of the views and the circumstances under which these memoirs appear, is due to the public.

Every observer must have perceived, that in human affairs, period and place have an irresistible influence over the fortunes of men and nations; that the circumstance of being born ten or twenty years before or after a particular event, or at a place an hundred miles east or west of a particular spot, may give to the pursuits and fortunes of an individual, as different a direction as that of any two unconnected persons. The reader's own reflection's will apply the sentiment to the geographical position of our country. The epocha in which it has been my fortune to have lived, may be considered in the magnitude and consequence of the events, to have exceeded every preceding period of equal duration; yet had the Revolution occurred twenty years sooner, it would have anticipated my birth and twenty years later, it would have found me in the tranquil pursuit of the profession for which I was intended; in the first case I could not have participated the triumph of the thirteen British Colonies, and in the last, I should not have ran the same ardent course which I shared with my youthful contemporaries, though in common with them, I might have witnessed the sad abuse of liberty and independence, which has prematurely sullied the character of our young republic.

Motives for writing these memoirs.

The stations I have filled, the observations I have made, and my intimacy with many eminent public characters, from the dawn of the revolution to the present day, enable me to throw many lights on the events of my own times to correct some historical delusions; and to

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CHAP. I.

place several distinguished characters on ground, where they may be viewed with more accuracy and justice than they hitherto have been; und possibly to draw forth others from that obscurity, in which artifice or envy, or the jealousy of ambition and power, has too successfully consigned them for so long a time.

Though sufficiently sensible of my deficiencies as an author, and of the charge of vanity to which I may be exposed, in seeking public applause by my feeble pen; a necessity more powerful than such apprehensions impels me to this appeal. Still, I should be wanting in candour, did I affect indifference to the favourable opinion of my countrymen and of posterity.

But I owe it to my contemporaries, my family, and my name, that the truth should be fairly told, whenever a topic is touched, and that the same independence of mind should be preserved, as if these memoirs were written in a distant country, and were not to appear till after my death.

Every man who enters into the trusts of a nation, owes to it an account of the manner in which he has performed his duty. A service of more than thirty years under innumerable vicissitudes, has been closed in a manner, which leaves it questionable with many, whether I have been the victim of my own misconduct, or of ministerial perfidy—of private intrigue, or gross and vindictive persecution; which last has been the too frequent fate of the most faithful and disinterested men in all ages, and under every form of government, although the reproach of such conduct has been particularly attributed to republics.

Looking upon myself, at the close of a long agency, as accountable to the great republican family of which I am a member, and aware how liable the actions and characters of men are to be discoloured by misrepresentations, these memoirs will serve to make the community better acquainted with the transactions in which I have been concerned, and the mode in which I discharged my public duty, than personal prejudice and powerful in-

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fluence have hitherto permitted. Having filled various high trusts, and been frequently and successfully employed in many affairs of great public importance, it will not be impertinent nor improper, to give such an account of my family, and the circumstances of my earlier years, as shall leave nothing for enquiry on those subjects.

In reviewing my past life, there does not appear to me any thing for remorse, and but little for repentance; though certainly very much for regret. My transgressions against the laws of my Creator have been too many, but they have been venial; and I trust have found their remission in a contrite heart. The principles of religion instilled into me by a pious protestant mother, have always been alive in my bosom; and the political creed I imbibed in the cradle of the revolution, has formed the undeviating rules of my conduct, under every change of power and vicissitude of fortune. I have lived in the service of my country, to which my life, labours, and best faculties have been zealously devoted, to the entire neglect of my private affairs. I have suffered many and grievous persecutions, alike unprovoked and unmerited, which were frequently produced by the most meritorious acts of my life.

The patrons and associates of my early youth (among whom I feel some pride in numbering the late Colonel William Fitzhugh of Maryland, to whose memory I feel a sincere pleasure in offering this tribute of gratitude,) were men of elevated sentiment, who "*worshipped honour as a real good,*" and taught me to respect it as the richest inheritance. From such associations I learned to avoid particular vices, and to form my principles on foundations which have supported and consoled me, with cheerful health and a warm heart, at a period of life when others are sinking under disease and despondency. With a sanguine temperament and ardent affections, feeling has prevailed more than judgment, in directing my career, and fame has presented allurements more inviting to me than that fortune, without which, in the present times, virtue and merit much more exalted must become a frail de-

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CHAP I.

pendence. Perhaps I have been too confiding, or not sufficiently mistrustful of mankind, particularly of men invested with delegated power, which they are too apt to convert to their own uses or abuses.

He owes every thing to his country, and can reproach it with nothing.

The justice of a nation is too often confounded with the acts of its agents, and the character of a government may be compromised by a weak or corrupt administration, contrary to the sense of the nation. It is perhaps to this perversion of authority, the frequent changes observable in other governments may be attributed, and points out the peculiar necessity of vigilance and reform in our own: therefore, when speaking of my personal wrongs, I disclaim all intention of reproaching my fellow citizens, the vast majority of whom are still innocent, honest, generous, and just. I certainly looked to the justice of the government for protection in my old age, after a life of services which have been acknowledged by the heroes and sages of the revolution. I could not suspect that to propitiate the concealed vengeance, which lurked under the affected clemency and justice of President Madison, I should have been sacrificed to make room for panders and sycophants, many of them distinguished only for moral turpitude, and unworthy of public trust. I was deceived, and, after passing my grand climacteric, have been despoiled of my hard-earned military fortune, and am left with the consciousness of what I have done, and what I have suffered, for the republic, as a recompense for the devotion of my life to her service.

His wrongs ascribed to President Madison.

Were it pardonable to compare where we cannot emulate, I should say with the great Phocion, "*that the same evil fortune which combats against worthy men, often produces complaints, reproaches and calumnies, instead of those honours and recompenses which they merit by their labours, and thus diminishes that confidence to which their virtue is entitled.*" Habituated from my birth to social refinements and the luxuries of the table, except when professional duties required self-denial, those who knew me only by the exterior, believed that penury and privations would affect my repose. Such illusions are natural to the irre-

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solute and effeminate; but as my mind has never been beguiled by prosperity, so its firmness cannot be shaken by adversity; and I now feel more pride, independence, and true dignity, in conforming my life to my circumstances, than I ever experienced at the head of a column glittering in arms.

Bowing myself submissively before the Most High, without a murmur at his decrees, I present these memoirs of my own times, as an ægis to that enmity and calumny which, having pursued me in so many forms, cannot be expected to refrain from the feast presented by these volumes. But should they furnish a salutary lesson to my contemporaries or posterity—should my misfortunes or my errors prove useful, and the enmity which I have experienced serve as a beacon to other men, I shall feel perfectly recompensed.

His birth, and affection for his native state.

If the accidental circumstance of birth can found a claim to gratitude, the urbane, loyal, generous, gallant state of Maryland, has a right to draw upon my affections without limitation. I was born in Calvert county, and have always gloried in my *natale solum*. The place of my nativity is near Patuxent river, about three miles from a decayed village,* rendered conspicuous by the debarkation of the British detachment under command of Major-general Ross, the 18th of August, 1814, which sacked and conflagrated the national edifices at the city of Washington.

As we cannot choose our parents, and all enter the world in the same helpless condition, it seems natural that little account should be made of family; yet, to anticipate curiosity, and to forestal enquiry, I hope I may be permitted to introduce my ancestors to the reader, without incurring the suspicion of affectation or vanity.

A brief account of his ances-

From the testaments† of my ancestors Robert Skinner, Thomas Holdsworth, James Heighe, and Joseph Wilkin-

* Benedict, on the right bank of the river Patuxent, called after the Christian name of one of the barons of Baltimore, who were the proprietors of the province.

† See Appendix, Nos. I. II. III. and IV.

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tors and their residence.

son, it will appear that my family is ancient and respectable; they were all from England; and the three first emigrated to the province of Maryland in the 16th century, probably *whilst the site of Philadelphia, now the first city of the United States, was still covered with its native woods.* I know little more of my paternal grandfather than his will records; he was a commercial man, emigrated from London to Maryland in 1729, married a daughter of William Skinner, M. D. and in consequence of ill health, returned to England in 1734, where he soon after died, and according to his brother-in-law and physician, William Skinner, who accompanied him, was buried in St. Paul's church yard, London. The active desultory engagements of my life, have prevented further enquiry after this branch of my family.

My ancestors originally settled on a tongue of land, formed by Chesapeake bay and Patuxent river, where my numerous relations still reside, and maintain the most respectable standing in society; they have declined in general political influence, yet united have a great preponderance in the politics of the county. This tract, remote from great public thoroughfares, and highways, secludes its inhabitants from general intercourse with the world; simplicity of manners and innocence of character, are of course preserved, and their hospitality is of the heart, untinctured with ostentation or sordid interests, and but for the political feuds which divide them, there could not be found in the whole union a more liberal, a less ambitious, a kinder or happier community.

The loss of his father.

I had the misfortune to lose my father before I had reached my seventh year. He paid the debt of nature the 4th of May, 1764, in the thirty-third year of his age, after a short illness. I recollect perfectly the circumstances of his death and funeral. He was beloved by his acquaintance, and his loss cast a gloom over his neighbourhood. His last words to me were graven on my memory, and have been ever associated with my remembrance of him: "My son, if you ever put up with an insult, I will disinherit you." I mention this trivial cir-

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Caprice of fortune.

cumstance, in the hope that respect to the injunctions of a father may extenuate some errors of my life. He was taken ill the same night, and never rose from his bed. I trust I may be excused for mentioning another incident, which deeply interested the fortunes of my family:—My father, to preserve his health and increase his property, purchased 500 acres of land lying on the Tyber and Potomack, which probably comprehends the President's house; but at that time, about 1762, the present seat of government was considered so remote from the early settlements of the province, that my mother objected to the removal on account of the distance, and my father transferred the property to Thomas Johns, esq. a friend and contemporary, of his neighbourhood, to whose family it proved an auspicious contract; but, in this case, the benefactor did not long enjoy the prosperity he had promoted.

Some account of his immediate relatives, and a glance at the state of society in 1768.

I am the second of four children; my sisters, who are junior to me, still live, and are married to Edward Reynolds, and James Morsel, esquires, both of my native county, men of respectability and fortune: my brother, General Joseph Wilkinson, in the enjoyment of ease and independence, continues to reside near the spot of our birth, respected and beloved for his integrity and benevolence, in spite of the political strife, which forms the atmosphere of republics, and divides almost equally the preeminent state of Maryland.

I remember that I wept for the loss of my father; but the misfortune was compensated, as far as it could be, by the fostering care of a noble-minded mother, to whose excellent understanding, tender care, and virtuous precepts, I am indebted for a sound constitution, my sense of justice, and of the Christian faith.

In the times of which I write, there were but two seminaries of learning in the three contiguous provinces; viz. the college of William and Mary in Virginia, incorporated in 1619, and the college, academy, and charity school of Philadelphia, incorporated in 1753. There was

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very little intercourse in those days between the colonists; comforts and even necessaries were imported from the mother country; but by the dispersion of stores and magazines over the southern provinces, every man was supplied with the productions of Europe near his door.

A journey of two hundred miles, within my remembrance, was viewed as a more distant and perilous adventure, than a voyage to China at this time; my honoured mother might, therefore, be excused for considering Georgetown, now the district of Columbia and the seat of empire, about forty miles distant from her residence, with the intervention of a large river, the back woods or frontier settlement of Maryland.

I could recite a hundred youthful incidents, which indicated the enterprise and activity of my future life, but they would be of little interest to my readers. My first excursion was to the town of Baltimore, for the purpose of being inoculated for the small-pox. This disease in the natural way, was as frightful in those days as the plague in London in the year 1665, and inoculation was considered an occult art, professed at that period in the southern states by a Doctor Stevenson only, who by his success acquired great celebrity.

His first excursion from home.

It was my first absence from the neighbourhood of my native domicile, the first separation from my only parent whom I worshipped, and the emotions produced still vibrate on my heart; as soon as my horse had passed the bounds of my former rides, my bosom was affected by sensations I had never before experienced; my gaiety forsook me, and my young heart was distended with anxiety: I had left behind me every thing I loved, and could attach no interest to what was before me; seventy miles appeared an endless journey; at every step the chords of my affections were strained, and at the approach of sunset, I would have given the world to return home. I was, however, under the guidance of a protector, and obliged to prosecute my journey; but as I approached Baltimore, my youthful mind was attracted by the novelties, which the place even then presented; and

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Diminutive size of the town of Baltimore, in 1770.

when I entered Market street, extending from Gay street to a short distance west of Calvert street, I thought myself transported to another region. The active scenes of business, the commixture, passage and re-passage, of men, women and children, wagons, drays, carts, dogs and horses, and the numerous tawdry signs swinging over the street, excited a degree of admiration and astonishment, which abated my solicitude for what I had left behind. Sweet ductility of the human mind! wisely ordained by a beneficent Creator to dissipate the cares, to soothe the sorrows, and blunt the edge of afflictions which "man is heir to."

There were then but few buildings north of the creek which now divides the city; and to reach Stevenson's folly, for such was the reproachful designation applied to the doctor's unfinished mansion, because it was somewhat more conspicuous than those of his neighbours, it was necessary to cross a common of near half a mile.

The class with which I was inoculated, consisted of John Custis and James Wormley of Virginia, James and Perry Frizby of Maryland, with half a dozen other young gentlemen from the southern provinces, of whom, I believe, I am the only survivor. Feeling no apprehension from the disease, I paid little respect to the prescribed regimen; and although my physician frequently attempted to alarm me, by exclaiming, "*Young gentleman, by Jasus, you will be peppered,*" I escaped with a slight cruptive fever, and was marked by a single pustule.

The amusements into which I entered with my new companions employed all my time, and the natural gaiety of my disposition, conspiring with the diversions by which I was encompassed, had so far silenced my partiality for the scenes of my birth place, that at the end of two months, I felt some reluctance in withdrawing from the attractions of Baltimore town. Thus were the bonds of local attachment rent; the walnut and the cedar and the cherry trees, under whose shade I had sported—the lawn on which I had gambolled, and the limpid foun-

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tain from which I had drank, no longer delighted my recollection, and the sweetest ligaments of human affections were broken.

General Wilkinson's education.

It would be unnecessary to say, my education was superficial, because the reader will have abundant proofs of the fact. I read the Latin classics, and studied the inferior branches of the mathematics, under William Hunter, a private tutor, and a graduate of the university of Glasgow. I was taken too early from school, and put to the study of medicine under my relation Dr. John Bond, an *elève* of his uncle Dr. Thomas Bond, formerly of Philadelphia. This gentleman had served in a provincial regiment on the borders of Canada, during the war of 1756, and like an old soldier, took pleasure in recounting the details of battles, particularly Braddock's defeat near Pittsburgh, and Wolfe's victory on the plains of Abraham; and to this circumstance I ascribe my earliest military predilections.

Is sent to Philadelphia.

In my seventeeth year, my honoured mother sent me to the medical school in Philadelphia. I ascended the Chesepeak from Plump point, the seat of my maternal grandmother Heighe, to Perch creek, from whence I crossed the isthmus to Hamburgh, and ascended the Delaware to Philadelphia, which at that time was the most prompt and convenient route of communication; I arrived in the evening, and understanding a detachment of *soldiers* were quartered in the northern liberties, I the next day visited the barracks, where four companies of the 18th or Royal Irish regiment of infantry, and a company of Royal artillery were stationed. On approaching the gate, for the first time in my life I beheld a man under arms, in complete uniform; he was a centinel on post, whose appearance rivetted my attention: after surveying him attentively from head to foot, I passed without obstruction and entered the barrack yard, where the first, and I may say only, object that struck my eyes, was the troops on parade at open order, which exhibited a more impressive spectacle than I had ever seen; indeed, I was fascinated, and gazed with astonishment at the prompt-

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ness and uniformity of the manual exercise which they performed; but when the ranks were closed, and the line was wheeled into column,—marched,—recovered its ground,—closed and displayed, I was struck with the idea of a painted wall, broken in pieces and put in motion; it appeared like enchantment, and my bosom throbbed with delight; my feelings were now inlisted—the latent propensities which had been excited by my relation Doctor Bond, were awakened—and from that day I felt the strongest inclinations to military life. I continued in Philadelphia from 1773 to 1775, at which time the medical class exceeded sixty, of whom Doctor Read of Charleston, is the only surviving acquaintance within my recollection. Whilst pursuing my studies, I sought, by imitating the best examples, to acquire gracefulness of address and ease of manners, and these inclinations were seconded by my solicitude, to merit the acquaintance of the most accomplished and respectable of the fair sex, whose ages corresponded with my own. This conduct was not in strict unison with the taste of all my classmates, and exposed me to sarcasms that terminated in an adventure, which left me to the free exercise of my own discretion; and to the connexions formed at that period, I owe the insuperable aversion I have ever had to libertinism and profligate dissipation; although no man ever indulged more freely, or tasted more exquisitely, those refined enjoyments which spring out of the reciprocities of congenial spirits, and the intercourses of virtuous sensibility.

My acquaintance with Major Hamilton, Captain Hamilton, Lieutenants Blackwood, Bruyere, Trist and other officers of the Royal Irish, was not favourable to my professional studies, but it was extremely grateful to my taste; and if the contest which commenced in 1775, had not taken place, it is highly possible I might have lived and died in the British service.

In the spring of 1774 I made a visit to New York, where I became acquainted with Thomas Barclay, Be-

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verly Robinson, Frederick Philips, Steven Watts,* and several other young gentlemen, with whom I parted in the revolution, but for whom I shall cherish unceasing respect and esteem, because they interested my early affections, and have grown grey in honour. At the same period, I formed an acquaintance with Morgan Lewis, and William Smith, who took active parts in the revolutionary war, deserve the favour of their country, and will enjoy my respect and affection while life endures.

General Gage's enterprise against Concord.

The abortive enterprise of General Gage against the town of Concord in Massachusetts, on the 19th of April, 1775, was unwise and unnecessary; diminutive in its objects, but important in its consequences. When the report of this act of open hostility reached Philadelphia, the deepest gloom overcast the whole population; the blow was sudden and unexpected; the sword had been drawn; blood had been spilt; and lives had been lost. The citizens were seen assembled in crowds at the corners of the streets; alarm and terror were excited; but the bitter animosities of civil contest still slumbered; the whole city exhibited a scene of funereal gloom and stillness; men spoke in whispers, as if afraid of being overheard, and the solemn peal which issued from the bells of Christ church, gave to the conjuncture an air of mournful solemnity, and oppressed with sorrow the unoffending loyal subjects of the largest city in British America. But this submission was short-lived; it soon gave way to indignation, resentment, and denunciations.

General Wilkinson commences the practice of medicine.

About the period of this memorable event I returned to Maryland, and sat down in the practice of medicine near the confluence of the Potomack and Monocacy rivers. But the affair of the 19th of April, had produced a gene-

* He entered the service of his sovereign, and was desperately wounded in the affair of General Herkimer on the Mohawk river, between the Oriska village and Fort Schuyler, and was left on the field of battle, where he lay several days in agony, before he was discovered and relieved; and I understand died not long since in England. My pen cannot add to the respectability of the other gentlemen.

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ral spirit of resistance throughout the colonies, and the preparations were correspondent with the general feelings. My youth had not allowed me time or means, to investigate the merits of the controversy: my impressions I received from the highest source of wisdom and virtue, from those dignified sages of the country, who composed the first Congress; whose policy was seconded by my feelings, and supported by that predilection for arms which I had previously imbibed.

Takes a decisive part in favour of the revolution.

I claim no credit for the part I took, when, with a burst of enthusiasm, the recollection of which warms my heart with self-applause, I declared for my native country, and bound my destiny to hers. It was, in truth, an impulse which characterised the times. The united colonies exhibited, in those days, a spectacle awful indeed to usurpers, but charming to the friends of civil liberty; of a whole people rising with one accord, to claim the right of self government, which man derives from his Creator:—If indecision was known at all, it was the momentary pause of Cæsar at the Rubicon. The feelings of ordinary men were elevated to grandeur, and all classes felt themselves ennobled by a contest for liberty.

I made my noviciate in arms and first shouldered a firelock in Georgetown,* Potomack, having associated myself with an independent company, commanded by Captain Thomas Richardson, a Quaker, from Rhode Island, in which the meritorious, unfortunate General Lingan, who a few years ago fell a victim to the political feuds which disfigure our country, was a subaltern. This company was drilled once a week, and the ground of parade was a small spot of table land, hanging over Rock creek, below the upper bridge. I resided thirty miles from the place of parade, but was punctual to the rendezvous.

In this temper of the colonists, the deliberate attack of the provincials at Breed's hill, the 17th of June, under the orders of General Gage, became the signal for a ge-

* Now the District of Columbia.

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neral appeal to arms, and determined the Congress to act upon the offensive; troops were levied; the town of Boston invested; and General Washington appointed commander in chief. These incidents excited my natural ardour, and determined me not to await the tardy proceedings of committees and conventions, then engaged in organising a regiment, afterwards commanded by Colonel William Smallwood; but, unrestrained by the admonitions of friends and relations, I abandoned my profession for ever, and at my own expense repaired to the camp before Boston, in September, and as a volunteer, joined the rifle corps under the gallant Colonel William Thompson of Pennsylvania.

On entering the camp near Boston, I was struck with the familiarity which prevailed among the soldiers and officers of all ranks; from the colonel to the private, I observed but little distinction; and I could not refrain from remarking, to the young gentlemen with whom I made acquaintance, that the military discipline of their troops was not so conspicuous as the civil subordination of the community in which I had lived.

The siege of Boston.

The siege of Boston was attended by no signal occurrence; the "*investissement*" was as complete as the nature of the ground, and the extent of the lines of circumvallation, would permit. I cannot amuse the reader with intrepid sorties nor desperate assaults, but I will endeavour to instruct him, by an illustration of the effects of habit on the human mind, drawn from a contrast of the sensibility of that day with the insensibility of the present. The provincials broke ground at Plowed hill, August 26th, about one mile north west, and in front, of the British post at Bunker's hill, on the peninsula of Charlestown. A detachment of riflemen, ordered to cover the working party, took post in an orchard, and under cover of stone fences in advance. As soon as the enemy discovered the workmen, they opened a battery upon them, and kept up a brisk cannonade, by which volunteer Simpson, of Pennsylvania, had one of his heels and ancles so much shattered, that a mortification ensued, and

The sympathies of 1775, contrasted with those of 1816.

he died in a few days. This young man was visited and consoled during his illness, by General Washington in person, and by most of the officers of rank belonging to the army. Every exertion of the faculty was made to save him, and his death became a theme of common sorrow in an army of twelve or fourteen thousand men. I witnessed the effect on my arrival, two or three weeks after. CHAP. I.

On another occasion, Nov. 10th, the enemy, availing himself of a high tide that inundated a causeway which connects Lechmore point with the main, crossed Charles river, and debarked a detachment to carry off several cattle which were feeding on the insulated spot. As soon as this movement was discovered, the rifle corps was ordered to dislodge the marauders, and forded on the causeway waist deep: but the enemy perceiving our determination, retired to their boats, and were out of the range of musket shot before we reached the point of their debarkation. A sloop of war which lay in the river opened her batteries on us; and a private soldier in a recumbent posture, was grazed on the ribs by a grape shot, which lacerated the muscular and intercostal integuments in such a manner, as to leave the appearance of an aperture into the cavity of his body, by which the faculty concluded the ball had entered, and of course the life of the poor soldier was despaired of. The solicitude of the corps, from the colonel to the ranks, was so strongly excited by the hopeless condition of this man, as to affect the repose of the camp; and if money could have assured his recovery, the fortunes of the corps would have been pledged: contrary, however, to all calculations, the wounded soldier breakfasted heartily the next morning, and in spite of the predictions of the surgeons, to the great satisfaction of his officers and comrades, was on his legs in a week, and at duty in a month.

Compare the general sympathy and fellow feeling manifested in the case of these humble individuals, at the camp before Boston in the year 1775, with the unheeded scenes

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of senseless slaughter, which we have recently beheld, wherein the blood of thousands of brave men has been wantonly wasted, to promote the ambitious views of individuals, and establish a character for national courage, which had been most solemnly recorded with the blood of the enemy almost half a century ago—in the triumphs of Trenton, of Princeton, of Saratoga, of Monmouth, of King's mountain, of Stoney point, of Powles hook, of the Cowpens, of Yorktown, of Eutaw, and many other places; and I will appeal to the casuist and the philosopher to decide, whether the character of our country has improved or deteriorated in the mild virtues, which form the sweetest traits of human character, and most effectually promote the happiness of mankind.

The resolution displayed by the provincials on the 17th of June, 1775, produced effects auspicious to the American cause, and co-extensive with the war; for although compelled by superior numbers to yield the ground, the obstinacy of their resistance put an end to that confidence with which they had been first attacked, and produced measures of caution bordering on timidity. Such are the illusions to which enlightend man is subject. There can be no doubt, that we were indebted to these causes for the unmolested occupancy of our position before Boston, which to complete the investissement was necessarily extended from Roxbury on the right, to Mystic river on the left, a rectilinear distance of about four miles, but by the only practicable route at least three leagues. The town of Boston is situate on a peninsula, united to the main at Roxbury on the south, by a narrow tongue of land, about a mile in length, which opened directly upon our extreme right. On the north, it is separated from the peninsula of Charlestown by Charles' river, half a mile wide. This peninsula is connected with the continent, by a short narrow causeway immediately under Bunker's hill, from whence there is a convenient and prompt communication of three quarters of a mile to Plowed hill, our extreme left, and a main road leading to our head quarters at Cambridge, two miles distant.

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These avenues being defended by strong works, difficult of access, the relative position of the two armies put it in the power of the British commander, to concentrate his main force at either extremity of his line, and carry an attack against our right or left at his discretion; in which he must have been successful, because he could have masked his movements, taken us by surprise, and beaten us in detail—our force being unavoidably too widely extended, and too much scattered for seasonable co-operation. These opinions are not the conceptions of the present moment; they are founded on the relative position and the comparative strength of the adverse corps, as viewed at the period, and will bear the strictest scrutiny.

Inaction of the British commander.

The British army under General Gage in Boston, consisted of twenty regiments* of the line, which ought not to be estimated at less than 10,000 men,† as he had suffered no diminution of his force but in the affairs of Lexington‡ and Breed's hill,§ and in those his loss could not have exceeded seven hundred, even if we admit one-third of his wounded to have died, which is an undue proportion in a combat of small arms. The continental army, of which General Washington took the command at Cambridge, July 3d, 1776, was rated at 14,500 militia,‖ without a shade of uniformity in its organization, pay, dress, arms, or exercise; destitute of subordination and discipline, and fluctuating from day to day, as the caprice of

Comparative strength of the adverse corps.

* General Washington's letter to the President of Congress, Jan. 4th, 1776.

† The Annual Register, vol. xix. p. 151, adverting to the evacuation of Boston, March 17th, 1776, almost nine months after General Washington took the command at Cambridge, says the army did not *exceed* at that time 9000 *healthy* and *effective* men; to which of sick, convalescent, seamen, and loyalists, 2000 might fairly be added.

‡ On the 19th of April, the British had 208 wounded, 65 killed, and 20 made prisoners, all ranks included.

§ On the 17th of June, they had 828 wounded, and 226 killed. Annual Register, vol. xviii. p. 128—135.

‖ Gordon's History, vol. i. p. 367.

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the men inclined them, to absent themselves or to rejoin their colours. At a later period, the General's command was reduced to 9,600 men. This might be considered the *numerical force* of the two armies; but *effective military strength* consists not so much in numbers, as in exact discipline and judicious appointments. In battles which depend on professional skill and experience, numbers without discipline, produce disorder, panic, and defeat. Our men, who were more than a match for the enemy in disorderly skirmishes, or behind breast-works and other impediments, when brought into regular action in open space, would have been overwhelmed by their own confusion. Besides, in the month of August, the cartridges in the men's boxes,* together with the powder† in magazine, would not have sufficed for twenty-four rounds a man; and the artillery was so badly supplied, throughout the siege, that the General dared not employ his batteries against the town, but partially and sparingly.

Effects of the battle of Breed's hill.

To the cool courage and obstinacy displayed in the battle of Breed's hill, and the moral influence of the bloody lesson, which Sir William Howe received on that day, we must ascribe the military phenomenon, of a motley band of undisciplined American yeomanry, scarcely superior in number, holding an army of British veterans, in close siege for nine months; and hence it might fairly be inferred, that our independence was essentially promoted by the consequence of this single battle. The firmness, prudence, and vigilance, of General Washington, and the general officers associated with him, were well adapted to profit by these first advantages. But, if while we lay at Cambridge, the enemy had advanced against us from Boston, we should have been beaten and dispersed; our artillery and munitions of war must have been captured; and the public confi-

Power of the enemy.

* General Washington's letter, Jan. 30th, 1776. He did not allow the men to have more than twelve or fifteen cartridges at a time.

† General Washington's letter, Aug. 4th, 1775.

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dence would have been withdrawn from the only man capable of conciliating local habits and prejudices, and harmonizing the discordant materials of which the army of 1776 was composed; or if the army had been withdrawn from the position in which General Washington found it, the effect would have been the same: indeed, under the favourable auspices of the season, the impatience and caprice which form predominant traits in the character of my countrymen, had generated some discontents and murmurs against General Washington, for his supposed inactivity before Boston. This fact, among a thousand others, shows how difficult it is at a distance to judge of the conduct of men entrusted with military operations. The public did not know at that time, that the enemy possessed the power to dislodge the General at their discretion; and that he was disposed to hazard the desperate enterprize, of attacking the town in batteaux by water from Cambridge river. But his plan was rejected by a council of war, which frustrated his purposes, fortunately for his fame and for the country; as the stationary batteries of the enemy in West Boston, independent of his light train, would have prevented our fragile transports from reaching the powder house or Barton's point, the meditated points of debarkation, and forced us to attempt a landing at the common, on a flat shore under a low bank, enfiladed from Boston neck, and in the face of at least forty pieces of field artillery, which would probably have destroyed us without the co-operation of small arms. The perilous circumstances of our situation about that time, is well described by General Washington in his letters of January, 1796. On the first day of that month, the commander in chief addressed the President of Congress in the following language: "*It is not perhaps in the power of history to furnish a case like ours—to maintain a post within musket shot of the enemy, for six months together, without* [*powder*]; *and at the same time to disband one army and recruit another, within that distance, of twenty*

Proposition to attack Boston, rejected in council of war.

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odd British regiments, is more than probably was ever attempted;" and General Greene* writes his friend from Prospect hill, Jan. 4th, 1776, "*Our situation has been critical; we have no part of the militia on this hill, and the night after the old troops went off, I could not have mustered 700 men, notwithstanding the returns of the new inlistments amount to 1900 and upwards.*"

That this account of our critical and distressful situation during the siege of Boston is not exaggerated, and that we owed our safety to the supineness of Sir William Howe, I will here introduce an authority above controversy; because, if the standing of the writer did not sanction his reports, the natural style and unaffected manner in which he details obvious truths and painful apprehensions, would carry conviction to the heart of incredulity itself: at the same time, I take unfeigned pleasure in offering this confidential communication of General Washington to the world, as a mirror in which the heart and the head of the man are seen, without affectation and without disguise: I with pride present it as a testimonial of his discernment, his vigilance, his candour, magnanimity and patriotism, which speaks more for his greatness and his virtues, than volumes of servile adulation or inflated panegyric, and must be received among the brightest and most durable ornaments which can decorate the history of our country. When we review the patience, the perseverance, the equanimity the undeviating consistency and inflexible resolution of this patriot, in prosperity and adversity, and compare him with the political pigmies of the present day, "who solely intent to bless themselves," clamber up the heights of ambition, regardless of the means, and look down with disdain on the authors of their elevation, we may turn with shame and humiliation from the disgusting contrast, and may well exclaim, "From what high hopes, to what relapse unlooked for, have we fallen."

* See Gordon.

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"*Cambridge*, 11*th Jan.* 1776.

"Dear Sir,

"The bearer presents an opportunity to me, of acknowledging the receipt of your favour of the 30th ultimo, (which never came to my hands till last night) and, if I have not done it before, of your other of the 23d preceding.

"The hints you have communicated from time to time, not only deserve but do most sincerely and cordially meet with my thanks. You cannot render a more acceptable service, nor in my estimation give me a more convincing proof of your friendship, than by a free, open, and undisguised account of every matter relative to myself, or conduct. I can bear to hear of imputed or real errors. The man who wishes to stand well in the opinion of others, must do this; because he is thereby enabled to correct his faults, or remove the prejudices which are imbibed against him. For this reason, I shall thank you for giving me the opinions of the world, upon such points as you know me to be interested in; for, as I have but one capital object in view, I could wish to make my conduct coincide with the wishes of mankind, as far as I can consistently; I mean without departing from that great line of duty which, though hid under a cloud for some time, from a peculiarity of circumstances, may nevertheless bear a scrutiny. My constant attention to the great and perplexing objects which continually rise to my view, absorbs all lesser considerations, and indeed scarcely allows me to reflect, that there is such a body in existence as the general court of this colony, but when I am reminded of it by a committee; nor can I upon recollection, discover in what instances (I wish they would be more explicit) I have been inattentive to, or slighted them—they could not, surely, conceive that there was a propriety in unbosoming the secrets of an army to them —that it was necessary to ask their opinion of throwing up an intrenchment, forming a battalion, &c. &c.; it

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must therefore be what I before hinted to you, and how to remedy it I hardly know, as I am acquainted with few of the members, never go out of my own lines, or see any of them in them.

"I am exceeding sorry to hear, that your little fleet has been shut in by the frost. I hope it has sailed ere this, and given you some proof of the utility of it, and enabled the Congress to bestow a little more attention to the affairs of this army, which suffers exceedingly by their over much business, or too little attention to it. We are now without any money in our treasury—powder in our magazines—arms in our stores. We are without a brigadier (the want of which has been twenty times urged) —engineers—expresses (though a committee has been appointed these two months to establish them)—and by and by, when we shall be called upon to take the field, shall not have a tent to lay in.—Apropos, what is doing with mine?

"These are evils but small in comparison of those which disturb my present repose. Our inlistments are at a stand; the fears I ever entertained are realised; that is, the *discontented officers* (for I do not know how else to account for it) have thrown such difficulties or stumbling blocks in the way of recruiting, that I no longer entertain a hope of completing the army by voluntary inlistments, and I see no move or likelihoods to do it by other means. In the two last weeks, we have inlisted but about a thousand men, whereas I was confidently led to believe, by all the officers I conversed with, that we should by this time have had the regiments nearly completed. Our total number upon paper amounts to about 10,500; but as a large portion of these are returned not joined, I never expect to receive them; as an ineffectual order has once issued to call them in; another is now gone forth, peremptorily requiring all officers under pain of being cashiered, and recruits as being treated as deserters, to join their respective regiments by the first day of next month, that I may know my real strength; but if my fears are not imaginary, I shall have a dreadful ac-

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count of the advanced month's pay. In consequence of the assurances given, and my expectation of having at least men enough inlisted to defend our lines, to which may be added, my unwillingness to burthen the cause with unnecessary expense, no relief of militia has been ordered in, to supply the places of those who are released from their engagements to-morrow, and on whom (though many have promised to continue out the month) there is no security for their stay. CHAP. I.

"Thus am I situated with respect to men: with regard to arms I am yet worse off. Before the dissolution of the old army, I issued an order directing three judicious men of each brigade, to attend, review, and appraise the good arms of every regiment; and finding a very great unwillingness in the men to part with their arms, at the same time not having it in my power to pay them for the months of November and December, I threatened severely, that every soldier who should carry away his fire-lock without leave, should never receive pay for those months; yet so many have been carried off, partly by stealth, but chiefly as condemned, that we have not at this time one hundred guns in the stores, of all that have been taken in the prize ship and from the soldiery, notwithstanding our regiments are not half complete; at the same time I am told, and believe it, that to restrain the inlistment to men with arms, you will get but few of the former, and still fewer of the latter, which would be good for any thing. How to get furnished I know not. I have applied to this and the neighbouring colonies, but with what success time only can tell. The reflection on my situation and that of this army, produces many an unhappy hour when all around me are wrapped in sleep. Few people know the predicament we are in, on a thousand accounts; fewer still will believe if any disaster happens to these lines, from what cause it flows. I have often thought how much happier I should have been, if, instead of accepting the command under such circumstances, I had taken my musket on my shoulder and entered the ranks, or, if I could have justified the measure to poste-

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rity and my own conscience, had retired to the back country, and lived in a wigwam. If I shall be able to rise superior to these, and many other difficulties which might be enumerated, *I shall most religiously believe, that the finger of Providence is in it, to blind the eyes of our enemies;* for surely if we get well through this month, it must be for want of their knowing the disadvantages we labour under.

"Could I have foreseen the difficulties which have come upon us; could I have known that such a backwardness would have been discovered among the old soldiers* to the service, all the generals upon earth should not have convinced me of the propriety of delaying an attack upon Boston till this time. When it can now be attempted, I will not undertake to say; but this much I will answer for, that no opportunity can present itself earlier than my wishes. But as this letter discloses some interesting truths, I shall be somewhat uneasy until I hear it gets to your hand, although the conveyance is thought safe.

"We made a successful attempt a few nights ago, upon the houses near Bunker's hill. A party under Major Knowlton, crossed upon the mill dam, (the night being dark) and set fire to and burnt down eight out of fourteen which were standing, and which we found they were daily pulling down for fuel. Five soldiers, and the wife of one of them, inhabiting one of the houses, were brought off prisoners; another soldier was killed: none of ours hurt.

"Having undoubted information of the embarkation of troops (somewhere from three to five hundred,) at Boston, and being convinced they are designed either for New York government (from whence we have some very disagreeable accounts of the conduct of the tories) or Virginia, I despatched General Lee a few days ago, in order to secure the city of New York from falling into their hands, as the consequences of such a blow might prove

* Militia who had taken arms the preceding spring and summer.

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fatal to our interests. He is also to enquire a little into the conduct of the Long Islanders, and such others as have by their conduct and declarations, proved themselves inimical to the common cause. To effect these purposes, he is to raise volunteers in Connecticut, and call upon the troops of New Jersey, if not contrary to any order of Congress.

"By a ship just arrived at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, we have London prints to the 2d of Nov. containing the addresses of parliament, which contain little more than a repetition of the speech, with assurances of standing by his majesty with lives and fortunes. The captains (for there were three or four of them passengers) say that we have nothing to expect but the most vigorous exertions of administration, who have a dead majority upon all questions, although the Duke of Grafton and General Conway, have joined the minority, as also the Bishop of Peterborough. These captains affirm confidently, that the five regiments from Ireland cannot any of them have arrived at Halifax, inasmuch as that by a violent storm on the 19th of October, the transports were forced, in a very distressed condition, into Milford haven (Wales), and were not in a condition to put to sea when they left London, and the weather has been such since, as to prevent heavy loaded ships from making a passage by this time. One or two transports, they add, were thought to be lost; but these arrived some considerable time ago at Boston, with three companies of the 17th regiment.

"Mr. S. Sayre has been committed to the Tower, upon the information of a certain Lieutenant or Adjutant Richardson (formerly of your city) for treasonable practices; an intention of seizing his majesty, and possessing himself of the Tower, it is said in the Crisis; but is admitted to bail himself in 500*l.* and two sureties in 250*l.* each.—What are the conjectures of the wise ones with you, of the French armament in the West Indies?—But previous to this, is there any certainty of such an armament? The captains, who are sensible men, heard nothing of

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this when they left England; nor does there appear any apprehensions on this score in any of the measures or speeches of administration. I should think the Congress will not, ought not, to adjourn at this important crisis; —but it is highly necessary, when I am at the end of the second sheet of paper, that I should adjourn my account of matters to another letter. I shall therefore, in Mrs. Washington's name, thank you for your good wishes towards her, and with compliments added to mine, to Mrs. Reed, &c. conclude.

"Dear Sir,

"Your sincere and affectionate servt."

This letter needs no comment; it is a most honourable testimonial of the entire confidence of General Washington, in his secretary Colonel Joseph Reed,* which could not have been reposed in a more honourable man, a more faithful friend, or a more zealous patriot; it also sustains the truth of the observation, that complaints and murmurs had been excited against the commander at Cambridge, which may be considered the germ of the cabal, which was afterwards matured against him.

THESE, INDEED, WERE TIMES WHICH TRIED MEN'S SOULS; but they have passed away and are forgotten, and the personal services and sufferings of those days, no longer appear to obtain that consideration in the eyes of the rulers of the republic, which the blessings of liberty and independence secured ought to inspire.

Conduct of General Howe,

It is difficult to account for Sir William Howe's extreme caution, after he succeeded General Gage in command, as the situation was calculated to excite his energies; but whatever may have been the cause, whether motives of personal policy, or views to ulterior operations on a more favourable theatre, or the desire to spare his troops, until he should receive reinforce-

* Afterwards adjutant-general of the army, and subsequently governor of Pennsylvania.

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ments, or whether, which is most probable, he waited for instructions from his government, his conduct operated favourably for the revolution: the free use of his artillery familiarised our men to danger, and by suffering himself to be shut up in the town of Boston, he enabled General Washington to make a selection of officers, to levy a new army, to organize his corps, to assimilate, partially, their modes of duty and exercise, to cherish the confidence of his troops, and to infuse among them some sense of the "*esprit du corps.*" Nor did he imitate the example of his antagonist; for, however puny his force, however circumscribed his means, he omitted no enterprise calculated to straiten the quarters of the enemy. To this end, and to keep up an imposing appearance, he successively occupied Plowed hill, Cobble hill, Lechmore point, and Dorchester heights. These encroachments brought into operation, several heavy batteries of the enemy, lavishly and perseveringly served with shot and shells, which were, on our part, languidly returned, from want of powder; but the fire of the enemy produced good effects; the few lives which were lost serving to prove its inefficacy, and increase the hardihood of our militia. As a volunteer, I accompanied those several operations, excepting the first; and, at this day, can retrace in my own bosom the rapid transition from apprehension to indifference.

and of General Washington.

The occupation of Dorchester heights enabled us to enfilade the enemy's works on Boston neck, laid open the southern quarter of the town, exposed a part of the harbour, and therefore reduced him to the alternative of dispossessing us, or abandoning his position. We broke ground on those heights in the night of the 4th of March,* and as soon as we were discovered, the enemy made demonstrations of a design to dislodge us. A body of

Occupancy of Dorchester heights.

March 5.

* Preceding the anniversary of the massacre in 1770, when a Boston mob forced a guard to fire upon and kill several of them, the officer commanding the guard, Captain Preston, was tried and acquitted by a jury of the country.

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troops were embarked from Boston, and the transports, accompanied by a floating battery, fell down the bay to the vicinity of the castle, with the apparent intention to debark on the north eastern shore of the heights, which decline in that direction, and terminate in a flat of some extent, projected within half a mile of Castle island. The transports came to anchor, and boats put off from them, evidently to search for landings, and examine as closely as possible our position and the works we had thrown up. From these circumstances, it has been my uniform opinion, Sir William Howe in making the detachment, obeyed a hasty impulse, without taking time to weigh consequences; and that on a more close examination of our works and numbers, his troops were wisely recalled; because, if three thousand men had been cut to pieces by fifteen hundred, in dislodging the provincials from an unfinished, contracted redoubt at Breed's hill, it would have required more than General Howe's whole army to have driven us from a post thrice as difficult of access, and defended by strong works and fourfold numbers, better organised, better armed, better fitted for action, and more judiciously disposed. The return and debarkation of the enemy at Boston the next morning, evinced his abandonment of the meditated attack, which has been in my judgment erroneously ascribed by our historians, to a gale which occurred in the night, and deranged the order of his transports, driving several of them on the shoals of Governor's island.

The enemy, now left without alternative, took immediate measures for the evacuation of the town; which was no doubt accelerated by our breaking ground on Nook's hill, a northern spur or projection of Dorchester heights, almost within point blank shot of his works on Boston neck, which it enfiladed, and also completely commanded the southern part of the town and harbour. Anticipating this movement, General Howe had placed and pointed a heavy battery to prevent the encroachment, which was opened the moment our pick-

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axes were heard on the frozen earth, and produced the desired effect; for the cannonade was irresistible, and obliged the working party, after the loss of a few men, to retire before the first range of gabions were filled; but the enemy continued a furious cannonade the whole night, and on looking at the ground a few days after, I found it literally ploughed up, the shot making trenches in the frozen earth which would have received the body of a horse. I had the curiosity to examine this battery, after we got possession of the town, and think it consisted of nine 32 pounders, which were spiked and left on their carriages without other injury.

March, 1776. General Wilkinson appointed captain.

Early in this month General Washington conferred on me my first commission of captain, in the regiment commanded by Colonel James Read, of New Hampshire, bearing date September, 1775; but being attached to General Greene's family, I did not join it until I reached New York. On the morning of the 17th, the advanced guards announced the retreat of the enemy from Bunker's hill, and soon after advice was received from Dorchester, that his fleet was falling down to Nantasket road.

Enemy evacuates Boston, March 17, 1776.

On the confirmation of this intelligence from head quarters, I accompanied Colonels Starke and Reed to take a view of Bunker's hill, and the memorable theatre of action on the 17th June, 1775, where the sword dissevered the ties of consanguinity, and cut asunder the social bonds which united the American colonies to the parent state.

Arrived on the field of battle, where those officers had performed conspicuous parts, with anxious enquiry I traced the general disposition of our yeomanry, on that eventful day, and the particular station of each corps: I marked the vestiges of the *post and rail fence* on the left, and a stone wall, thrown up by order of Colonel Clark, on the beach of Mystic river, which covered our armed citizens. I paced the distance to the point, from whence the British light infantry, after three successive gallant

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charges, were finally repulsed. I examined the redoubt, the retrenchment, the landings and approaches of the enemy, and every point of attack and defence. Resting on the parapet where, nine months before, "valour's self might have stood appalled," I surveyed the whole ground at a glance, and eagerly devoured the information imparted by my veteran companions,* which differed essentially from all the accounts I had then heard, or have since read, and was conveyed to my understanding in a manner so simple and so clear, as to realise the combat to my imagination, and imprint the circumstances and the scenery so deeply on my memory, that I have never been at a loss, to delineate the ground or describe the battle.

With a throbbing breast I stepped from this ground of unequal conflict, where American farmers, contending for the rights of nature, for their wives and children, and posterity unborn, bared their bosoms to the bayonets of veteran mercenaries; where victory so long balanced, between native courage and disciplined bravery, between freemen who contended for liberty, and the armed ruffian who fights for bread; and following my leaders, we traversed the ruins of Charlestown, lately the abode of thousands animated by the buz of active industry and social happiness, now buried in its own ashes.

Visit to Boston.

Arrived at the ferry stairs, we discovered a canoe on shore, which we launched, and embarking in it, crossed Charles's river to Boston; and, on the *presumption* the enemy had taken their departure, we marched directly through the town, by a long narrow winding street, to the fortifications on Roxbury neck, which had been skilfully designed and well executed: here I first saw the little military engine called cal-trops, or crow-feet, which the enemy had scattered over the street within his works.

* They had served during the seven years' war in Rogers's Rangers, on the frontiers of Canada, and Starke commanded a company of provincials under General Wolfe.

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It appeared that the enemy had, very properly, forbid the inhabitants to leave their houses during the embarkation, and from this cause or their ignorance of his movements, or the timidity produced by their long residence with him, and the fear of reproach from their countrymen, the houses of the inhabitants continued shut up, and the town presented a frightful solitude in the bosom of a numerous population. After several fruitless applications of our canes to doors and windows, we gained admittance into a house, where we were kindly treated by a well known whig, whose circumstances compelled him to abide with the enemy: I regret I should have forgotten his name. This day was the Sabbath, and the most solemn I had seen; a death-like silence pervaded an inhabited city, and spectacles of waste and spoil struck the eye at almost every step.

General Washington enters Boston.

On entering the town he had so long blockaded,* General Washington enjoyed his triumph and the merited honours conferred on him by the voice of Massachusetts, with characteristic dignity and reserve; and on a public occasion in Boston, where I happened to be present, he took occasion to *express his satisfaction, that the place should have been taken without bloodshed;* but in these our enlightened days, a president of the United States has been found to approve the *wanton waste* of human life, for the "honour of the nation;" and torrents of the best blood of the country have been prodigally expended, to raise the reputation of a favourite—to conceal the want of system in military operations—to mitigate the incompetency of the public councils—to wash out the stains of moral turpitude, and give lustre to flagitious characters.

Jan. 11th.

For the safety of New York, General Lee had been ordered to that city, and the rifle regiment and other corps

* General Washington took possession of the town on the 18th, and conferred the command on General Greene. In those days it was believed that bloodless victories were most honourable to the victors, and that the first duty of a chief was to preserve his men:—Such seemed to be the opinions of General Washington, who was a great economist of human life.

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had been detached to support him: the commander in chief now put in motion for the same place, the main body of his inlisted yeomanry, who were engaged to the end of the year: I continued with General Greene in Boston, until the beginning of April, when we marched, and were overtaken by General Washington at Providence. Here we spent a few days, and proceeded from thence to New London by Norwich, where I embarked with General Washington's guards, commanded by Captain Gibbs, and having narrowly escaped shipwreck, during a heavy gale in the sound, arrived at New York, after suffering extremely for the first time, from that oppressive malady called sea sickness. General Washington had preceded us, and General Greene with his brigade arrived the 17th.

Captain Wilkinson leaves Boston with General Greene,

Arrives at New York.

Preferring the duties of the line, as the most profitable school for a noviciate, to a staff appointment, I took command of my company on the 18th, when an incident occurred, the recollection of which, at this distant day, causes me a twinge of sensible regret. My first lieutenant, Grover, old enough to be my father, had served with the provincials in 1758, and was a sergeant of the rangers under Lord Howe, the day on which that gallant young nobleman, yielding to the impetuosity of his spirit, threw away his life in pursuit of a party of flying Canadians.* This

Case of Lieutenant Grover.

* Lord Howe was second to General Abercromby on the unfortunate expedition against Ticonderoga, in 1758, and was considered the life and soul of the service. Commanding the elite, which consisted of the light infantry and provincial rangers, he preceded the army, and landed at the foot of Lake George, where he found the advanced post of the enemy. A loose skirmish ensued, and the French made a rapid retreat, hard pressed by his lordship, over a broken and rugged surface, covered with a thick forest intermingled with hemlock. Being well acquainted with the country, the Canadians retreated by a ford of the strait which connects lakes George and Champlain, at the foot of the first cataract, and having gained the opposite bank, they turned about and delivered a random fire at their pursuers, by which Lord Howe was killed (August 6, 1758) about one and an half miles from the place where he landed. I received this information the 22d of April, 1814, from Judge Kellog, a most respectable old gentleman, who now resides on the very tract over which Lord Howe

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veteran lieutenant had distinguished himself in the battle of Breed's hill; he had levied the company and commanded it; but his want of education was considered a bar to his promotion, and the commission was conferred on me by the commander in chief. Nevertheless, poor Grover's pretensions were strong, and my sense of justice pleaded in his behalf. I thought then, and I think still, that military rank should be held as sacred as the vestal fire, and that the officer who voluntarily yields his just claim to promotion, except in cases of reward for very extraordinary service, gives the strongest proofs of his unworthiness to wear a sword. If improper characters be introduced into the service, it is the fault of the executive, because he has an opportunity for examination prior to appointment; but he certainly has *no right* to distinguish a citizen, that he may disgrace him; yet, "*forgetting right, and consulting power,*" President Madison has sanctioned the tyranny and the cruelty, of dismissing and dishonouring military officers of his own appointment, on secret informations, without a charge and without a hearing. But in the case before us, my own judgment was silenced by that of the commander in chief, announced in general orders, which I was bound to obey.

The regiment was ordered for muster, the day I entered on duty; the company was paraded, and I presented myself to take the command; but when I gave the order to shoulder firelocks, the men remained motionless, and the lieutenant, stepping up to me, enquired where I was going to march the men. I answered that he should presently see, but, in the mean time, he must consider himself in arrest for mutiny, and "march to his room," which he did without hesitation.* I then addressed my-

pursued the Canadians. The Judge's father belonged to the provincial service at the time, and gave this account of the affair to his son. I examined the ground at the period mentioned, and discovered vestiges of the chimnies of the French barracks, on a small elevation near the landing at the head of the strait, where Lord Howe and the British army debarked.

* This incident is noticed by General Washington, in his letters of the 5th and 11th of May, 1776, to the President of Congress. It ap-

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self to the company; pointed out to them my right of command, and the necessity for their obedience; I informed them that I should repeat the order, and if it was not instantly obeyed, I should run the man nearest to me through the body, and would proceed on from right to left, so long as they continued refractory and my strength would support me. I had no further trouble, but joined the regiment, and marched to the parade of general muster, *in front of the present City Hall, and facing the south; the ground in our rear being then unoccupied by buildings.*

A comparative view of the weight and influence of the city and state of New York, in 1776, with their magnitude and importance in 1816, will furnish a fair criterion by which we may estimate, the wonderful population and improvement of our country, in the short period of forty years; and the observation must be my apology, for inviting my readers, in this place, to examine attentively the rapid aggrandisement of the national family—to reflect seriously on the causes which produced *independence, universal toleration, security of persons, and self government* to the British colonies—and to meditate profoundly upon the means indispensable to the perpetuation of the rich inheritance.

To preserve to confederated America the inestimable blessings, which have ceased to exist elsewhere, the citizens of the United States are bound by the most solemn obligations of gratitude and of duty; of gratitude to their ancestors, from whom they received them, and of duty to their posterity, to whom they stand pledged to transmit them. But how is that equal liberty to be preserved in this country, which has been lost in every other? The task is a difficult one, but it is by no means impracticable. A frequent recurrence to, and a determined support of, the principles of the revolution, will secure the

pears Grover was tried, and that the General disapproved the sentence of the court, but finally excused him after he had made written acknowledgments; he, however, never joined the company while I commanded it.

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virtuous administration of the government, and that alone can resist the principle of corruption, inherent in all temporal institutions. Among the eternal enemies of equal rights and free governments, we find the lusts of power and wealth the most prominent; which, in their very nature, tend to aristocracy, and terminate in monarchy or despotism. The administration of the public power and the influence of wealth cannot, therefore, be too sedulously watched, nor too cautiously guarded against. At this early period they have made their appearance in our political horizon, and are visible, in the universal passion for office; in the almost universal silence of the public prints on the measures of the majority; in executive encroachments, and the acquiescence of the correlative branches of the government; in the vile barter of the executive patronage for popular support; in official arrogance, and the lofty assumption of the servants of the people; in the conversion of the daily pay of the members of the legislature into fixed salaries, at an enormous increase, without the consent of the people; in the attempt to increase the salaries of the public officers, at a time when the avidity for office is without example, and the nation is burthened with debt; in the unnecessary and pernicious extension of the foreign relations of the country, contrary to the admonition of the greatest man who has lived in it; in the unnecessary and dangerous increase of the standing army in time of universal peace; in doctrines and measures calculated to foster a dominant military spirit in these states, to debauch the rising generation from the solid pursuits of civil life, and insensibly to raise a superstructure of profligate pageantry and idleness, on the ruins of industry, simplicity of manners, and the social virtues; in the inculcation of the humiliating, anti-republican, destructive sentiment, that the safety of these sequestered states, three thousand miles removed from any power competent to injure them, must depend on fleets and armies, and not on the intrinsic strength and resources of the country, which have been and must continue to be the bulwark of the nation, *so long*

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as its present form of government is preserved; in the frequent violations of the constitution by the executive magistrate, even to the sanction of murder; and above all, in *the usurpation of the legislative body, to appoint the executive, without the consent of the people.*

These are not false alarms, nor the clamours of discontent; they are the offspring of a bosom alive to the cause of representative government, virtuously administered, and are founded on the observation of an humble individual, content with his humility, and superior to official dependence; they are the infallible symptoms of a political malady, which if not checked by some seasonable corrective, will soon infect the whole system, and then it must inevitably follow, that the government, instituted by society for its own use, will be converted into the property of those who may be intrusted with its administration. To prevent these menacing evils; to extract the poisons which have been insidiously infused into the body politic, and to cleanse and cure the ulcers of state, the people must arouse from that lethargy and cold indifference, which forms the last vice of political society; they must interpose their natural and indefeasible prerogatives; they must think and act *from themselves, and for themselves;* and correct the public abuses, by removing from their confidence and the public councils, the authors of those abuses and their coadjutors. I submit these reflections to the reader, with great deference, but with the most upright intention, and zealous regard for the civil institutions of our common country, and will resume the thread of my narrative.

April 21. Four regiments had been ordered to reinforce the army in Canada, and sailed for Albany, under Brigadier-general Thompson. The activity employed on the fortifications of New York, produced such a pressure of duty, that I was alternately on guard and fatigue, day about, until the 26th of April, when my regiment, with those of Starke from New Hampshire, Wayne's and Irvine's from Pennsylvania, and Winde's and Dayton's from New Jersey, were put under marching orders for Canada, sub-

Ordered for Canada. April 29.

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ject to the command of Brigadier-general Sullivan. I sailed from New York with my company, and the corps rendezvoused at Albany, where they were reviewed by Major-general Schuyler, and I marched two days after for Fort William Henry, at the south end of Lake George, and arrived there the 15th. At this post I found General Schuyler in command, and met the late Bishop Carroll on his return from Canada, from whom I received such unfavourable accounts of the situation of affairs, as made it necessary to accelerate my march. I embarked in two large batteaux with my company, and a quantity of provision the 17th, and reached the foot of Lake George the next evening. Early the following morning, I marched across the portage, two and a half miles, to Ticonderoga, where other boats loaded with provisions were furnished me, and having shipped a Canadian, who carried the mail between Montreal and Albany, for my pilot, I sailed to Crown point, where I encamped for the night. Early on the 20th, I got under way with a favourable breeze, and beheld the mountain tops, which bordered the lake, covered with snow; the wind freshened until it blew a gale, which caught us mid-lake, opposite to the present site of Burlington, and would have drowned us all, but for the skill and conduct of my pilot, who by means of the small blanket-sails we had rigged, kept the leading boat before the wind, and running close in with the north point of Valcour island, by a sudden turn of the helm, brought us under its lee, and extricated us from the swell of the sea, which threatened with every wave to fill our batteaux. Here I was wind bound the 21st. Sailed at day-light the 22d, with a favourable breeze, and reached St. John's about 4 o'clock. At this place I met a Mr. Price, a merchant of Montreal, who had distinguished himself for his attachment to the American cause, and his services to Gen. Montgomery. From this gentleman, I learned the misfortune which had taken place at the Cedars, on the Cataraque; that the main army was encamped at the mouth of the Sorel, and Brig. Gen. Arnold with a handful of men had advanced to La Chine, a short dis-

May 8. Arrives at Albany.

Marches and embarks at Lake George.

Reaches St. John's.

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tance above Montreal, to cover that city. On the march route from Albany I made the third company, being preceded by Captains Oliver and Spalding, who, in descending Lake Champlain, hugged the eastern shore, and ran into Missisqui bay, which caused me to anticipate them at St. John's. I found this post without garrison or commandant, but infested by numbers of stragglers from the army, who could give no satisfactory account of themselves. Being myself without orders, written or verbal, beyond that place, I yielded to the general impulse of my breast, and determined to reinforce the weakest point. Accordingly, having taken under my command every man who acknowledged himself to be a soldier, I marched for La Prairie, upwards of one hundred strong, our company establishment being at that time 86 non-commissioned officers and privates. On entering the wood which skirted the open ground around St. John's, I was assailed by swarms of musquitoes, more numerous than I have ever beheld on the banks of the Mississippi; but they disappeared as soon as we traversed the forest and entered the plains, which was a short distance. I found quarters in a Canadian barn, about three leagues from St. John's; and at a similar distance the next morning I reached La Prairie, from whence I had a charming prospect of the rapids of the St. Lawrence, the island of St. Helena, the city of Montreal and its mountains, which form a picturesque back ground, and furnish a pleasing rest to the eye; the "*tout ensemble*" presents one of the finest landscapes in the interior of North America. The village of La Prairie consisted of half a dozen humble wooden houses, and a church. I did not understand a word of the French language, nor could one of the inhabitants speak English: I learned however, by signs and gestures, that the place I sought was above me: I therefore marched up the right bank of the river, crossed a creek which I now know to be "*La Tortue*," traversed a wood about a mile in depth, and ascending a gentle acclivity, from its summit perceived an Indian village near me. This was inhabited by the Cachnawaga tribe of the Iroquois, who

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acknowledged Colonel Louis* for their chief, and were much attached to the Bostonians, the name by which all the British colonists were known among the Canadians.

An interpreter met me as I entered the village, and pointed to La Chine directly opposite. I spoke to the chiefs; made an arrangement for ferrying my men after me; embarked in a birch canoe, the first I had seen, and, though the river was a mile wide, in ten minutes after presented myself to General Arnold, to whom I was a stranger. My small reinforcement was opportune and unexpected, as I found the General busily engaged with about 250 men, in retrenching a spacious stone magazine to resist Major Foster of the British service, who had reduced our garrison of 390 men posted at the Cedars, on the Cataraque, had made prisoners of Major Sherburne and a detachment of 100 men who were marching to reinforce the garrison, and was now advancing with a force composed of 40 men of the 8th regiment of British infantry, 100 Canadians, and 500 Indians, which he had incorporated at Oswegatchie.

May 22, 1776. Joins Arnold at La Chine.

La Chine is the name of the landing place at the head of those rapids of the St. Lawrence, which terminate opposite Montreal, from whence it is about three leagues distant. At this place the batteaux of the lakes, and the birch canoes for Grand, or Ottawa river, receive their loads, and take their departure for their respective voyages.

The day after my arrival, two of my men, who had walked up the shore, in quest of milk, were made prisoners and hurried off by an Indian scout; but in ascend-

* This chief, the issue of a negro and a squaw, had been with the Count de Villiers, in 1754, at the capture of Colonel Washington and his little garrison at Fort Necessity. On the commencement of the revolution, Louis repaired to General Washington, at Cambridge, to whom he was personally known, was employed, with the commission of a colonel, and proved faithful to the American cause. He had removed from Cachnawaga to St. Regis, and on my arrival at the French Mills, in 1813, called on me; he was then bent and withered with age, and I understand is since dead.

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ing a hill, one of them slackening his pace, fell in the rear, wheeled suddenly, and sprang off in retreat; the savages halted, turned about, fired and wounded him terribly in a tender part; yet he made his escape, and warned us of the approach of the enemy, which was confirmed about sunset by Foster's drum.

General Arnold, at this time, was on a visit to Cachnawaga, but his place was well supplied by a Colonel Brown, (the same who reduced Chamblée, and was afterwards killed near Johnstown) and a Colonel Williams, both of whom had served with General Montgomery before Quebec.

We turned out, and stood by our arms until ten o'clock; when perceiving no movement of the enemy, the guards were doubled, and we retired to our quarters. Our situation was so critical, that it excited my utmost vigilance; and I employed myself in meditating on the best means of defence, while my comrades were carousing on the best cheer they could find. The hour of repose having arrived, I resisted the importunities of my companions to lay down, alleging that we might be surprised when asleep, and therefore whilst others slept I watched, and occupied myself in writing to my friend General Greene, with whom I supported a correspondence to the close of the war.

This letter was written just at the close of my nineteenth year, and is marked by its juvenility of style; yet it but too faithfully pourtrayed the deplorable situation of the army in Canada, and was the precursor of the misfortunes which awaited it; it is a testimonial of my intimacy with General Greene, and is recorded with a letter from General Washington to the President of Congress, which furnishes evidence of the consideration in which I was held by our illustrious commander, at that tender age; for these reasons I trust I shall be excused for submitting those documents to the reader in this place;

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Extract of a Letter from General Washington to the President of Congress, dated New York, June 17th, 1776.

"I am much concerned for the situation of our affairs in Canada, and am fearful ere this it is much worse than was first reported at Philadelphia. The intelligence from thence, in a letter from Captain Wilkinson of the 2d regiment, to General Greene, is truly alarming; it not only confirms the account of Colonel Bedel's, and Major Sherburne's defeat, but seems to forbode General Arnold's, with the loss of Montreal. I have enclosed a copy of the letter, which will but too well shew that there is foundation for my apprehensions."

CAPTAIN WILKINSON TO GENERAL GREENE.

[Inclosed to the President of Congress.]

"La Chine, May 24th, 1776, 12 o'clock at night, about 12 miles from Montreal.

"My Dear Sir,

"We are now in a sweet situation. A part of the garrison at Detroit, in conjunction with Indians and Canadians, to the amount of 1000 men, have made themselves masters of Colonel Bedel's regiment, who were stationed about nine miles from this place, among the cedars, and have cut off our friend Major Sherburne,* with 140 men, who were detached to relieve the regiment, which defended itself in a little fort. The Major, with that courage which marked his character, pushed his way, after an engagement of four hours, into the fort, and was obliged to yield for want of ammunition and provisions; since which time General Arnold, with a handful of men, have been throwing up a breastwork here, in order to stop the enemy's progress, and had indeed meditated a plan of attacking them; but, alas! so astonishingly are matters conducted in this quarter, that notwithstanding the General's most pressing solicitations, and the length of

* Since General Sherburne, of Newport, Rhode Island.

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time since he took possession of this post, we cannot now muster more than 350 men, whilst the proximity and movements of the enemy, assure us that we shall be attacked within six hours. Their drums were heard this evening at our camp, and a man of mine was shot through the thigh, within half a mile of it, by an Indian, who took off a prisoner. But the morning dawns—that morn, big with the fate of a few, a handful of brave fellows. I shall do my part—but remember, if I fall, I am sacrificed. May God bless you equal to your merits.—Vale!

(Signed) "JA. WILKINSON."*

In less than twenty days after writing this letter to General Greene, I was made the instrument of saving Arnold and the garrison of Montreal, from the grasp of Sir Guy Carleton.

The advance of Foster, left no doubt of his intention to attack us the ensuing morning; and we were all at a loss for the cause of his declining the attack, until the

May 25. appearance of Colonel De Haas, about 8 o'clock in the forenoon with a detachment of about 500 Pennsylvanian

Foster retreats and is pursued. infantry and riflemen. Foster, in the course of the night, had received advice from his spies of the approach of this reinforcement, which caused him to retreat with precipitation. Arnold pursued him the same day; my company formed the advanced guard, and Colonel Brown volunteered by my side. We reached Fort Ann, at the head of Montreal island, the next day about 3 o'clock, just as Foster's rear had landed on the opposite shore, and our main body got up about 4 o'clock; but the batteaux, with our baggage, stores, and provisions, being obstructed by a strong current between Montreal and Perault islands, did not arrive until 5 o'clock.

Arnold arrives at Fort St. Ann, Orders immediately issued to discharge the loads, and embark the troops, which were executed with zeal and promptitude, but without regularity or arrangement. The

* The information contained in this letter respecting the affair of the Cedars was, of course, founded on rumour.

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whole embarked in disorder, and followed Arnold, in crowded batteaux, loaded to the gunwale, who directed his course to the opposite shore, in a light birch canoe paddled by four Iroquois Indians.

and embarks the troops to attack the enemy.

The current was strong, and the river more than a mile wide. Two of our captives discovered themselves in an inundated thicket, and were taken off by the General, at every hazard of decoy and ambuscade. We were immediately after ordered to fall down about half a league, and land in an extensive bay, formed by a bend in the right bank of the river.

The sun was setting, the sky unclouded, the atmosphere serene, the surface on which we floated as smooth as a mirror, and the spire of the church of Quinze Chenes, together with the white Canadian houses ranged along the coast, diversified the prospect most agreeably. But this charming tranquil scene was speedily converted into one more animated. As we approached the shore, we perceived the detachment of British troops employed on the beach, and the Indians ranging themselves on the bank. At half cannon shot, Foster opened a battery of two four pounders upon us, which he had taken at the Cedars, and the savages began to yell and fire from one extremity of their line to the other. Our distance was too great for any effect from small arms; but we were eminently exposed to the artillery, every shot plunging beneath or passing over us, and the slightest touch of our fragile craft, would have sent a crew to the bottom, as we were too deeply laden to furnish the smallest relief to each other.

The moment the cannonade commenced, we were ordered to rest on our oars; the fire of the enemy was deliberate, and the current constantly changing our position, soon drifted us beyond the range of his shot. Arnold in the meanwhile darted about in his canoe, without apparent object or end, and finally gave orders for re-ascending the river to Fort St. Ann, where we relanded about 8 o'clock, P. M. A council of war was immediately convened to include captains, and Arnold desired me

Council of war.

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to record the proceedings. He proposed to the council, "*that we should ascend the Grand river a few miles, under cover of the night, gain the rear of the enemy, and fall on them at day-break. He asserted the feasibility of the enterprise, and urged it for the deliverance of the captives taken at the Cedars,*" who, we understood, were confined in the parish church of Quinze Chenes, under a guard of savages. Colonel Hazen was opposed to this enterprise, "*from his long acquaintance with the Indian character: he was satisfied their vigilance would prevent surprise, and that the moment of attack would be the signal for the massacre of their prisoners.*" Colonel De Haas inclined to the same opinion. Captains Josiah Harmer, William Butler, myself, and some others, were not convinced by the arguments of the colonels; but contended, that "*the prisoners themselves, nobly despising personal danger, would solicit the attack, at the peril of their lives; since it must eventuate in the defeat of the hord of savages, and the capture of Foster's party of regular troops.*" After much debate, we were out-voted, and Arnold, although highly irritated, did not on his own authority think proper to enforce his proposition.

The council broke up about midnight, in discontent and disgust; some reproachful language having passed between Arnold and Hazen. A short time after, the officer of the day announced a parley, from a boat on the river: it was answered, and the flag permitted to land, and Lieuteant Bird of the 8th British regiment, was presented to the General by Major Sherbune, who had been captured on his march to reinforce the post at the Cedars. A conference ensued, in which it appeared that Sherburne and the senior officers, captured by Foster, had been prevailed on the day before to enter into a convention with him, which Arnold, with some modification, confirmed.

Convention with the enemy.

By this convention of Arnold the government was pledged to exchange the prisoners, and Captain Sullivan, with three other officers, were left as hostages for the performance. But the Congress, after due deliber-

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tion, determined the agreement to be an unathorised act on the part of Arnold; yet they agreed to ratify it, though under such stipulations as defeated the effect, and the hostages were afterwards liberated, and sent home by Sir Guy Carleton.

Here we have a strong testimony of the indecision of Arnold, who had the enemy completely in his power, before the arrival of the flag, and much more so afterwards; but he felt an attraction towards Montreal, at the moment, which damped his military ardour.

Having the next day visited Foster, and settled with him the subordinate arrangements incident to the convention, Arnold set out for Montreal the following morning, leaving the command in Colonel De Haas. On the 30th of May, the Colonel received a peremptory order, to cross the lake of the Two Mountains,* and destroy a village of the Iroquois, called Canasadago, six or eight miles from our encampment. The youth of the detachment exulted in these orders; but De Haas deliberated on the execution, and to get rid of them resorted to a council of war, which, (in spite of the opposition of a few determined spirits) concluded to reject them, and he fell back to La Chine.

May 27.

Order to Colonel De Haas disobeyed.

I had the mortification, by order of De Haas, to be the bearer of the proceedings of this council to General Arnold, which I delivered to him in Montreal, the same evening, after a fatiguing ride through a deluge of rain. On perusing the despatch, Arnold expressed great indignation; reproached the whole detachment as well as the Colonel, and concluded by observing, that "*none but cowards would hesitate to obey a positive order.*" Piqued at this illiberality and rudeness, I observed to him, "*Sir, you censure the detachment unjustly; several of the officers were zealous for the enterprise, and the Colonel alone is responsible.*" This observation seemed to affect the General; he paused, and after some time ask-

Arnold's illiberal conduct.

* A circular expansion of Grand river at the head of Montreal island, not exceeding four miles in the broadest part.

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ed me to sup, which I declined, although I had not broke fast that day, and retired to a wretched tavern, where I was obliged to lie down in my wet clothes.

De Haas returns to Montreal.

Early the next morning, I received verbal orders to join my company, which I met at La Chine, with De Haas, and the whole detachment. From thence we marched into Montreal, and as soon as the troops were dismissed, I received a request from General Arnold, to join him as his aid-de-camp, to which I assented, being flattered by the preference of an officer, who had at that period acquired great celebrity.

Captain Wilkinson refuses General Arnold's order, for plundering the merchants of Montreal.

A few days after I entered his family, the General put into my hands sundry invoices of stores and merchandises, belonging to the inhabitants of the town, which he directed me to demand and receive from the several proprietors, and to give orders on him for payment at the foot of the invoices; but in case the owners should refuse the delivery, then the goods were to be seized, packed up by a guard which attended me, and conveyed to head quarters. As well as I recollect, I first called on a Mrs. M'C——d, whose husband was in Quebec, for a quarter cask of Madeira wine, who gave me such a Xantippiad, as cut short our interview and saved her wine. I then proceeded to the house of a merchant of respectability, I believe a Mr. Forsyth, or a Mr. Leith: his invoice was presented to him, and acknowledged to be correct; but to my demand for the delivery of the goods, he replied, "*These are the goods, Sir; they are in your power; I cannot deliver them but in my own wrong; you must know that your troops are about to quit this province* (which, by the bye, I did not), *and what could I do with your paper money; it would be mere chaff, and I should, by the delivery, forfeit my claim on the crown for indemnity. Your own breast must determine whether it be just, under such circumstances, to take a man's property from him.*"

These observations struck forcibly upon my mind; I made some rapid reflections on the obligations of my profession, the limits of obedience, and the nature of

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the service on which I was ordered, against which my understanding and feelings revolted; I, therefore, pocketted the invoice, marched back the guard to head quarters, and requested the General to excuse me from the execution of an order, which "*appeared to be rather mercantile than military.*" He admitted my excuse, but observed, that I was "*more nice than wise;*" and ordered me to hold myself in readiness to descend the river to the head quarters of the army at Sorel; pursuant to which, I embarked about noon, on board a twelve-oared batteau, with despatches for General Sullivan. The wind was strong a-head, which caused a considerable swell in the river, and retarded my progress. I had passed Boucherville, and was approaching Varenne, on the right bank of the St. Lawrence, fourteen miles below Montreal, when I heard the report of a cannon, at no great distance in my front, the smoke of which was concealed from me, by the point of land on which Varenne stands, my boat being close in with the right shore to avoid the force of the wind. I ordered my men to rest on their oars, and was pausing to discover the occasion of this shot, when a second report, at a greater distance, announced a military movement, and solved my difficulties. I immediately ran my batteaux ashore, hauled her up, left every thing standing, ordered my party under arms, and marched to the main road. It still remained to be ascertained what movement it was (for I really had little suspicion of an enemy), and therefore I marched forward until within 200 yards of the head of the village, when a platoon of the enemy turned the corner of the street and fired; for what cause, unless as a signal, I have never been able to devise; as it could hardly have been at my small party, which, if the enemy had not shewn themselves, would in five minutes have been their prisoners; but, being now satisfied the enemy had actually arrived within fourteen miles of Montreal, without General Arnold's knowledge, my solicitude was awakened for his safety, and that of the corps he commanded. I inclined to the right, leaped a fence, and under shelter of

Meets Sir Guy Carleton and the British army at Varenne.

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a copse of wood, retreated as fast as my men could run, keeping the wood between me and the enemy.

The city of Montreal is situate on the left bank of the St. Lawrence, where it is a mile wide, at the head of ship navigation and at the foot of a shoal rapid, with the beautiful little island of St. Helena in its front, which by compressing the stream increases its velocity. Three hours had scarcely elapsed since I had left the place in perfect security, one third of the garrison down with the small-pox, and no American dreaming of the approach of an enemy. What then must have been the feelings of a young soldier, at this unexpected rencontre of the British army on the opposite bank of the river, at a moment when he believed General Sullivan still occupied his position at the mouth of Sorel, fifteen or twenty leagues below? I realise at this moment my emotions; but all my exertions would have been unavailing, if the wind had not failed at that critical moment, and obliged the British fleet to cast anchor; or, if General Carleton had not halted, when by an easy march of four hours over a smooth road, on the margin of the river, five hundred men and a single field piece, could have intercepted Arnold, with a garrison of twelve or fifteen hundred, who, being cut off from succour or retreat, must have surrendered at discretion.

To favour the escape of General Arnold with his garrison, it was necessary he should receive the earliest information of the near approach of the enemy. I therefore continued my pace without halt, and leaving the party in charge of my sergeant, mounted a horse barebacked, which I discovered at the door of a wind-mill, and rode full speed three leagues to Longuille, where I found the inhabitants apprised of the advance of the enemy, and almost in a state of hostility. At the point of my sword, I extorted a paddle, and compelled a Canadian to assist me in launching a canoe from the beach, into which I jumped, and with much labour gained the opposite shore, half a league below the town, and about six o'clock I reached Arnold's quarters. He was exceedingly sur-

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prised at my report, having just received advice of General Sullivan's retreat from Sorel, and was making preparations to cross the St. Lawrence, but did not contemplate this movement before the next morning, which would have been too late.

Warns Arnold of his danger.

Every means was now put in operation to effect the passage of the river in the course of the night; and I was ordered immediately to recross it, and traverse the country by the direct route to Chamblée, twelve miles, to report to General Sullivan the situation in which I had discovered the enemy, and request a detachment to cover General Arnold's retreat by La Prairie. To expedite this service, I was advised to cross the river above the island of St. Helena; but found the passage so much obstructed by rocks, shoals and rapids, that I did not make the opposite shore and reach Longuille until it was dark. I found a public horse at the parish priest's, mounted him, and arrived at Chamblée about nine o'clock at night.

Ordered to Chamblée.

The scene here presented to me can never be effaced. The front of our retreating army, overwhelmed with fatigue, lay scattered in disorder over the plain, and buried in sleep, without a single sentinel to watch for its safety. I rode through the encampment, entered the fort by the drawbridge, dismounted, and presented myself to General Sullivan, in his quarters, without being halted or even hailed. Notwithstanding the dissimilitude of the occasion, the prostrate unprotected situation in which I found our camp, recalled to my memory Virgil's truly affecting episode of Nisus and Euryalus. The General, and his companions, Colonels St. Clair, Maxwell, and Hazen, all appeared astonished at my information of the near approach of the enemy to Montreal. Maxwell in the Scottish dialect exclaimed, "*Be the Lard, it cannot be possible;*" to which I emphatically retorted, "*Be the Lard, Sir, you know not what you say.*" Sullivan and St. Clair, who were both acquainted with me, interposed and corrected Maxwell's indecorum. It was acknowledged on all hands, that a detachment was necessary to

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co-operate with Arnold; but how to effect it, under the actual circumstances of the moment, was a matter of much difficulty: the night was profoundly dark; the rain poured down in torrents; the troops at hand were fatigued, and in great disorder; and there was no officer to receive or execute orders. After some deliberation it was determined, that I should proceed down the Sorel, with instructions to Brigadier-general the Baron de Woedtke, who commanded the rear, to make a detachment of 500 men, to cover General Arnold's retreat. The exercises of the day had prepared me rather for repose, and I was a stranger to the route; yet I received the order with cheerfulness. I was directed to keep the main road on the bank of the Sorel, which Colonel Hazen informed me, was quite plain and unobstructed; but he deceived me, and owing to the darkness of the night, I presently missed my way, and narrowly escaped plunging into Little River, where it is twenty feet deep. After my escape, I dismounted, and securing my horse, groped my may in the dark, ancle deep in mud, until I discovered a bridge of batteaux, formed for the passage of the infantry, on which I crossed.

Is despatched with instructions to the Baron de Woedtke.

I found every house and hut in my route crowded with stragglers, *men without officers, and officers without men,* yet could learn nothing of the Baron de Woedtke, every one appearing solely intent on his own accommodation and comfort. Despondency had seized on all ranks, and under favour of a dark and tempestuous night, with five hundred fresh men the whole army could have been destroyed. It is from such awful examples, the youthful soldier acquires experience, and learns lessons of vigilance and caution, which are not to be attained on fields of parade, or in the theories of the ablest captains who ever lived.

Wet to the skin, covered with mud, and exhausted by hunger, fatigue, and a night march of several hours, I threw myself down on the floor of a filthy cabin, and slept until the dawn of day, when I arose and prosecuted my march in quest of the Prussian baron. The first offi-

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cer of my acquaintance whom I met, was Lieutenant-colonel William Allen of the 2d Pennsylvania regiment, who, to my inquiry for De Woedtke, replied, he had "*no doubt the beast was drunk, and in front of the army.*" I then informed him of my orders for a detachment, to cover Arnold's retreat from Montreal. His reply was remarkable: "This army, Wilkinson, is conquered by its fears, and I doubt whether you can draw assistance from it; but Colonel Wayne is in the rear, and if any one can do it, he is the man." On which I quickened my pace, and half an hour after met that gallant soldier, with whom I had made an intimacy at New York, as much at his ease as if he was marching to a parade of exercise; he confirmed Allen's report respecting De Woedtke, and without hesitation determined to carry the order into execution if possible. For this purpose, he halted at the bridge, and posted a guard, with orders to stop every man, without respect to corps, who appeared to be active, alert, and equipped. Such was the effect of this plan, that, notwithstanding the disorder which prevailed, in less than an hour, the detachment was completely formed, and in motion for Longuille; when, by one of those caprices of the human mind which baffles inquiry, it was observable that those very men, who had been only the day before retreating in confusion, before a division of the enemy, now marched with alacrity against his main body!

Falls in with Colonel Wayne who executes the order.

We had proceeded about two miles, when we met an express from Arnold, with verbal information of his escape from Montreal, and that he should be able to make good his retreat by La Prairie.

Arnold retreats.

This information brought Colonel Wayne to the right about. We crossed Little river at a ford, on the direct road from Longuille, and found the rear of the army had got up to Chamblée. Our detachment was discovered advancing on the bank of the Sorel, two miles below the fort; and its return by that route being unexpected, we were taken for the enemy, and great alarm and confusion

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ensued in the main body of the troops; the drums beat to arms, and General Sullivan and his officers were observed making great exertions to prepare for battle; but at the same time, numbers were seen to seek safety by flight. Colonel Wayne halted his column, pulled out his glass, and seemed to enjoy the panic his appearance had produced, until I suggested that he would interrupt the labours of the troops on the portage of Chamblée, and delay the movement of the army; after which he sent me forward to correct the delusion. On my approach to Chamblée, I met Colonel Hazen on horseback, alone and at full speed directly towards the column of Colonel Wayne. As he passed me, he inquired what troops those were in my rear, but made no halt, and I never have been able to penetrate the motive of this movement; for if it had been the enemy whom he approached, our army was irretrievably lost. On approaching General Sullivan, I reported Colonel Wayne and his detachment, and received orders for him to march by his right, on a devious path, which at a league's distance intersected the route from La Prairie to St. John's, and still to co-operate with General Arnold, should it be found necessary; but when we reached the road, we discovered that Arnold had passed, and the bridge of Little river on fire. We therefore turned to the left, and followed him to St. John's, where we arrived in the evening, and found General Sullivan with the front of the army.

June 18. The army embarks and arrives at the Isle aux Noix.

The whole of the troops, their baggage, stores and provisions, excepting three pieces of iron ordnance, were got up to St. John's two days afterwards; and the necessary arrangements being made, the army embarked and moved up the Sorel in the afternoon of the same day. After the last boat but Arnold's had put off, at his instance we mounted our horses, and proceeded two miles down the direct road to Chamblée, where we met the advance of the British division under Lieutenant-general Burgoyne. We reconnoitred it a few minutes, then galloped back to St. John's, and stripping our horses, Arnold shot his

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own, and ordered me to follow his example, which I did with reluctance. The sun was now down, and the enemy's front in view, when we took an affectionate leave of Colonel Louis, the faithful chief of the Cachnawaga tribe, and the only Canadian who accompanied the army in its retreat from Canada: he cast a sorrowful look at our boat, and retired precipitately into the adjacent forest. He continued firm in his attachment to our cause throughout the revolutionary contest.

General Arnold then ordered all hands on board, and resisting my proffers of service, pushed off the boat with his own hands, and thus indulged the vanity of being the last man who embarked from the shores of the enemy. We followed the army twelve miles to the Isle aux Noix, where we arrived after dark, and found it encamped on low, flat, wet ground, scarcely above the surface of the water.

When these last scenes are reviewed, if the escape of our army from Canada was not countenanced by Sir Guy Carleton,* it must appear miraculous: on the one hand, our retreat was embarrassed by disease and incumbered with a ponderous *attirail;* on the other, the pursuit de-

* This suggestion springs out of the character of that distinguished soldier and statesman; and is grounded on the general tenor of his conduct to his prisoners, and the following authentic anecdote.

Subsequent to the surrender of the British army at Saratoga, Captain Richard England, of the 47th British grenadiers, with whom I had been previously acquainted, informed me, that after the affair of Three Rivers, and when our troops were retreating, being himself advanced with a detachment in the pursuit, he received information, from a Canadian, of a party of the fugitives on a back route; and Sir Guy Carleton coming up at the same time, he mentioned the circumstance to him, and asked permission to cut it off, who replied, "What would you do with them; have you spare provisions for them; or would you send them to Quebec to starve? No, let the poor creatures go home and carry with them a tale, which will serve his majesty more effectually than their capture." If such benevolence had marked the conduct of all the British commanders, the royal cause would have had a much better chance of success.

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pended solely on the discretion of the commander, whose vast superiority of force, combined with its health and vigour, would have justified any enterprize. But it seemed as if apprehension removed our debility, and gave wings to our feet; whilst injudicious delays, unnecessary caution, or political considerations, retarded the movements of the enemy; and instead of harassing our rear, interrupting our march, and forcing us to a general action, or putting us to the rout, the tardiness of his operations gave us time to retire, without the loss of either men or stores.

General Sullivan, an officer of great resolution and perseverance, had determined to defend his position at the mouth of the Sorel, until forced from his purpose by the remonstrances of Colonel St. Clair and other field officers; and to this cause may be ascribed the unseasonable advice of his movement to General Arnold, and the advantage he gave General Carleton, who, with his whole army afloat, reached our position a few hours after General Sullivan had abandoned it.

Conduct of General Carleton.

Here General Carleton certainly committed a *faux pas*, which as certainly saved our army, as will be apparent by a glance at the sketch of the country,* from which it will be seen, that Montreal and Chamblée are nearly equidistant from the mouth of the Sorel; but that the courses of the two rivers contract the distance between the former places to about twelve miles. Now, if Sir Guy had made a prompt debarkation of his whole force at the Sorel, and detached his *elite*, with four day's provisions on the men's backs, to overtake, harass, and delay our retreating, diseased, disordered, heart-broken corps, whilst his main body followed alertly to press an engagement; or if he had passed the Sorel without a halt, and availed himself of the same breeze which brought him to Varenne, where I met him at 2 o'clock the 15th, he could have reached Longuille the morning of that day, before I left Montreal or Arnold had received General Sullivan's despatch, and of consequence, being

* See Atlas, No. I.

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on the north side of the St. Lawrence, we should have been obliged to lay down our arms, without firing a shot. A column of five thousand men, despatched at the same time for Chamblée, would have intercepted General Sullivan. In either case, the operation would have been decisive in the capture or destruction of the whole American army in Canada.

Fortunately for us, General Carleton adopted a different course; he landed Lieutenant-general Burgoyne with a division of the army at Sorel, under orders of such marked circumspection, as cramped his natural enterprize,* while Sir Guy himself proceeded up the river for Montreal with his main body; but in consequence of the failure of the wind, he halted at Varenne, where I fortunately met him, and by my prompt communication to Arnold, enabled that officer to cross the St. Lawrence, in the course of the night, and, with all his incumbrances, to elude the grasp of Sir Guy, by a march of 26 miles in one day, from Longuille, by La Prairie, to St. John's. June 16th.

By what a slight thread was the issue of the revolution at this moment suspended! If our Canadian army had been lost, it is not improbable that the dubious question of independence, not yet decided at that juncture, would have been negatived, or possibly a negotiation opened with the British commissioners, and a reconciliation with the parent state might have followed. General Washington, whose lofty soul and inflexible purposes were not to be affected by ordinary circumstances, in a letter to the President of Congress, describing our scattered, divided, and broken Canadian army, thus expresses himself: "I will only add my apprehensions, that one of the latter events, either that they are cut off, or made prisoners, has already happened; and if it has taken place, it will not be easy to describe all the *fatal consequences* that may flow from it." Wonderful indeed was our escape, and complicated the causes to which it

June 23d, 1776. General Washington's letter to Congress.

* This I heard from General Burgoyne's own lips.

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may be attributed! But for General Carleton's short halt at the mouth of the Sorel, the sudden failure of the breeze which wafted him up to Varenne, my fortunate rencontre of him at that place, and the tardy movement of the column under Lieutenant-general Burgoyne, the apprehensions of General Washington must inevitably have been realised. Whatever may have been the reflections of the philosopher or the casuist on that occasion, it was manifest to me that the hand of Heaven was interposed for our deliverance, as it frequently has been in the cause of our country. Let us not then forfeit the Divine favour, by the dereliction of religious and moral obligations, for the indulgence of those passions, which neither promote our temporal comfort nor provide for our eternal happiness.

Dishonourable conduct of General Arnold.

Amidst the brilliant career which General Arnold was pursuing, he stained his character by an indelible act of dishonour, ascribed by many who knew him well, to the prejudices of early education.* The order which I had rejected in Montreal, was carried into execution by a less scrupulous agent, and the merchants of that place were plundered of their merchandize, under the pretext of providing for the officers of the army. The booty was committed to the charge of a Captain Scott, a reduced officer of Jersey, conveyed across the lakes, and transported to Albany, where it was sold, General Arnold pocketing the proceeds. This transaction was notorious, and excited discontent and clamour in the army; yet it produced no regular inquiry, though it sunk him in the esteem of every man of honour, and determined me to leave his family, on the first proper occasion; and this occurred at Ticonderoga in the following month.

* He was represented to have been an half-bred apothecary, had became the skipper of a vessel, a trader to the West Indies, a dealer in horses, and a bold adventurer in all his undertakings.

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CHAPTER II.

General Arnold departs from the Isle aux Noix, and arrives at Albany, accompanied by Captain Wilkinson.—Character of General Schuyler.—Question between Generals Schuyler and Gates, as to the right of command.—Referred to the commander in chief.—General Sullivan's reluctance to retire from Isle aux Noix.—Determines to proceed to Crown Point.—The latter place abandoned.—Remonstrance of the field officers.—General Washington's conduct on the occasion.—Description of Crown Point.—Taking of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, by General Amherst.—Death of General Predeaux before Niagara.—Anecdotes of General Charles Lee.—Reasons for abandoning Crown Point.—A project of Captain Wilkinson.—The execution of it intrusted to Captain Wilson, who fails in it.—Lieutenant Whitcomb's enterprize and Brigadier-general Gordon's death.—Arrest of Colonel Hazen by General Arnold.—General Arnold's controversy with a general court martial.—Conduct of General Gates.—Exposition of the relative powers of general courts martial, and the constituent authority.—Tyranny and injustice of President Madison exemplified.—Remarks on the defects of our military code.—The site of Ticonderoga described.—Comparison of General Abercrombie's operations before Ticonderoga in 1758, with those of General Packenham before New Orleans, in 1815.—Reflections offered to rash and inexperienced officers.—French Lines.—General Abercrombie's attack on them.—Captain Wilkinson appointed Brigade-major.—General Arnold hoists his pendant on board the Royal Savage.—His instructions from General Gates.—Brigade major Wilkinson transferred to General Sinclair's brigade.—A glance at General St. Clair's military life.—Reflections on services and rewards.—The

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tendency of public ingratitude.—Brigadier-general Arnold's naval operations.—Reflections on General Arnold's conduct, and the effects of his defeat.—General Carleton arrives at Crown Point, reconnoitres our works at Ticonderoga, and retires into winter quarters.

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THE spoils which General Arnold had collected at Montreal, were before him on the way to Albany; and he was interested in making arrangements for their disposal; at the same time it was necessary General Schuyler, the chief of the northern department, should be advised of the retreat of the army from Canada, and consulted in respect to future dispositions. On such an occasion, a free conference was to be preferred to a written correspondence; and who so proper for this communication as the second in command. The mission corresponded with his views, and after receiving General Sullivan's full instructions, with a despatch for General
June 19. Schuyler, he embarked, accompanied by me, in an open boat, and proceeded for Albany, where we arrived the night of the 24th, and the next morning visited General Schuyler at his seat.

Character of General Schuyler.

This officer, an *elève* of Major-general Bradstreet, in the seven year's war, possessed a strong, fertile and cultivated mind; with polished manners he united the most amiable disposition and insinuating address, and his convivial pleasantry never failed to interest and enliven his society: in the discharge of his military duties, he was able, prompt, and decisive, and his conduct in every branch of service marked by active industry and rapid execution; but he excelled in the departments of commissary and quarter-master general, of which he had acquired extensive knowledge in his former service; yet, as General Gates had been appointed to supersede General Sullivan in the command of the army of Canada, General Schuyler determined to await his arrival, which
June 27. took place a day or two after, when a difficulty arose between those gentlemen, respecting the right of command.
Question between Generals
Schuyler was the senior officer, and commanded the

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Schuyler and Gates, as to right of command, referred to General Washington.

northern department; Gates had been appointed commander in chief in Canada, with dictatorial powers,* until October ensuing; but the army to which he was appointed had retreated, and he found it within Schuyler's jurisdiction. The tenacity of military chiefs, might have found ample cause for dissension, in a case where the manifest intention of the government had been contravened by accidental circumstances; but to their mutual credit, an amicable explanation and a reference to the commander in chief, removed every difficulty.

When General Arnold left the Isle aux Noix, General Sullivan, reluctant to yield an inch of ground, indulged hopes he might be able to hold that position; but such thoughts were soon dissipated by the inconvenience and insalubrity of the spot, embosomed in a low swampy wilderness, with bad water, and within half musket shot of the main land on either side; and his removal was probably hastened by an unlucky accident† which occurred a day or two after we took leave of him. Yet this gallant officer, unwilling to increase his distance from Canada, on breaking up his camp at the Isle aux Noix, meditated taking post at the Isle la Motte, near the foot of Lake

* Extract of a letter from the honourable John Adams to Major-general Gates, dated

"*Philadelphia, June* 18*th*, 1776.

"My dear General,

"We have ordered you to the post of honour, and made you dictator in Canada for six months, or at least until the first of October.—We do not choose to trust you, Generals, with too much power for too long a time."

† Without apprehension of danger, the officers were in the practice of visiting a Canadian hut on the western shore of the river, to drink spruce beer. The scouts of the enemy had observed this intercourse, and formed an ambuscade of Indians, who suddenly attacked an unarmed party, within eighty rods of the camp and in sight of the army, killed and scalped Captain Adams, Ensign Culbertson, and two privates, and made prisoners Captain M'Lane, and Lieutenants M'Farran, M'Allister, and Hogg, with two privates; Captain Rippy and Lieutenant Rush made their escape in a canoe. I think the party was from the Pennsylvania line.

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Champlain; but when he reflected on the remoteness of that position from succour or resource, the deficiency of his means, the increasing sickness of his troops, and the want of suitable aliment for their comfort and cure, he determined to proceed up the lake to Crown point, where he halted and encamped, and when I reached that place, I found the troops still festering in disease,* and the convalescent engaged in fatigues, which indicated the intention of a permanent establishment.

The general officers determine to abandon Crown point.

Generals Schuyler, Gates, and Arnold, arrived a few days after, when an occurrence took place, which is worthy note, because it will convey to the reader a distinct idea of the state of the discipline and subordination which prevailed in the American army at that time. The general officers, in a council of war, determined to abandon Crown point in favour of Ticonderoga; but so soon as this resolution was promulgated to the army, a number of the field officers† called a meeting, and entered into a remonstrance against the decision of their superiors, which together with the proceedings of the council, was transmitted to the commander in chief, General Washington, and caused him some inquietude; for, although he coincided in judgment with the field officers, those views of policy and principles of service which seldom failed him, prevented his approval of their remonstrance, and he

Remonstrance of the field officers.

General Washington's conduct on the occasion.

* Extract of a letter from Major-general Gates, addressed to Mr. Hancock, President of Congress, dated

"*Ticonderoga, July 16th*, 1776.

"Upon my arrival at Albany the 27th ultimo, General Schuyler assumed the command of the army in this department, alleging that the resolves of Congress and General Washington's instructions to me, were confined to Canada. I submitted, and went with General Schuyler and General Arnold to Crown point, where we found the wretched remains of what was once a very respectable body of troops —that pestilential disease, the small pox, has taken such deep root, that the camp had more the appearance of a general hospital than an army formed to oppose the invasion of a successful and enterprsing enemy."

† Colonel St. Clair did not join the protesters or approve their opinion.

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contented himself with the exposition of his opinions* to the President of Congress and Generals Schuyler and Gates, which, owing to his defective knowledge of the topography of the country, happened in this instance to be erroneous. Generals Schuyler and Gates took fire at the implied censure of the general officers, who had given their opinions to General Washington against the abandonment of Crown point and the preference of Ticonderoga. They made common cause, and in spirited terms

* Extract of a letter from General Washington to the President of Congress, dated

"*New York, July* 19*th*, 1776.

"I confess the determination of the council of general officers on the 7th, to retreat from Crown point, surprised me much; and the more I consider it, the more striking does the impropriety appear. The reasons assigned against it by the field officers in their remonstrance, coincide greatly with my own ideas and those of the *other general officers* I have had an opportunity of conversing with, and seem to be of considerable weight, I may add conclusive. I am not fully acquainted with the geography of that country, and the situation of the different posts, as to pronounce a peremptory judgment upon the matter; but if my ideas are right, the possession of Crown point is essential to give us the superiority and mastery upon the lake.

"That the enemy will possess it as soon as abandoned by us there can be no doubt; and if they do, whatever gallies or force we keep on the lake, will be unquestionably in their rear. How they are to be supported there, or what succour can be drawn from them there, is beyond my comprehension. Perhaps it is only meant that they shall be employed on the communication between that and Ticonderoga. If this is the case, I fear the views of Congress will not be answered, nor the salutary effects be derived from them that were intended.

"I have mentioned my surprise to General Schuyler, and would by the advice of the general officers, have directed that that post should be maintained, had it not been for two causes; an apprehension that the works have been destroyed, and that, if the army should be ordered from Ticonderoga or the post opposite to it (where I presume they are), to repossess it, they would have neither one place nor another secure and in a defensible state; the other lest it might increase the jealousy and diversity of opinions which seem already too prevalent in that army, and establish a precedent for the inferior officers to set up their judgments whenever they would in opposition to those of their superiors, a matter of great delicacy, and that might lead to fatal consequences if countenanced: though, in the present instance, I could have wished their reasoning had prevailed."

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vindicated their judgment to the commander in chief; reprehended in strong language, the general officers to whom General Washington alluded, and carried their complaints to Congress; the steady temperate course, however, of the commander in chief prevented serious consequences.

Description of Crown point.

Crown point is an elevated plain, interspersed with irregularities, and by the abrupt contraction of the lake, may be considered its head land. It is formed by a deep bay on the west, which is skirted by a rugged steep mountain; by the body of the lake on the north; and a prolongation of its waters on the east, which from 500 rods are suddenly contracted to 116 at Chimney point, opposite to the ruins of Fort Frederick, from whence in their course to Skeensborough (now White Hall), they take the form and inflexions of a river considerably varied in its width.

Taking of Ticonderoga and Crown point, in 1759, by General Amherst.

This spot, called "Pointe Chevelure" by the French, who first occupied it as a military position, in 1731, was slightly fortified at the pass into the broad waters of the lake; their barrier post being Carillon, a quadrangular work, with regular bastions of masonry built on a rock, at Ticonderoga, fifteen miles south, but most injudiciously placed. On the approach of General Amherst, in 1759, Mons. Bourlemarque the French commander, retired from Ticonderoga with his main body, leaving a garrison of four hundred men, to defend the fort, and intrenched himself on the opposite sides of the strait formed by Crown point and Chimney point. General Amherst opened trenches against Carillon the 23d July, and the place was abandoned and blown up, after a feeble defence, on the 26th. The British general advanced to Crown point the 4th of August, from whence the French troops had previously retired, and his chief engineer, Colonel Eyre, immediately selected the site and traced the lines of Fort Frederick, a regular pentagonal fortification, with three redoubts, calculated for a garrison of 2000 men. A considerable part of the ditch of this work was blown out of solid lime-stone, the fragments of which, broken in small pieces, form part of the

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glacis for the south-east curtain. After the peace of 1763, this place was occupied by a subaltern, with a mere safeguard, and was the residence of an engineer by the name of Benzel; but it was accidentally burned before the American revolution. The position of Fort Frederick does not appear to be the most judicious the ground admitted; it is in the angle formed by the bay on the west, and the lake to the north, and was selected it would seem for the convenience of water, and the protection of the harbour.

Death of General Predeaux, July 19, 1759.

While General Amherst was engaged in the erection of Fort Frederick, General Predeaux was slain at the siege of Niagara by the bursting of a shell just as it escaped the mouth of a coborn. Sir William Johnson succeeded to the command, and after reducing the place, (July 25th,) Lieutenant Moncrief, accompanied by Captain Charles Lee,* was despatched with the intelligence to the commander in chief at Crown point. Lee's family, fortune, education and talents gave him consideration in the eyes of General Amherst, who, during his stay there, condescended to invite him to visit the works on which the troops were labouring, and even to ask his opinions of them. Captain Lee commended the plan and execution, but, having examined the circumjacent ground from the rampart, called the General's attention to a knob at half cannon shot, the summit of which commanded the crown of the parapet, and observed, that he *"feared it might furnish an inconvenient lodgment to an enemy in case of a siege."* The justice of the remark did not render it less unpalatable, for military chiefs are frequently more apt than any other men in power, to become impatient under the criticisms of their subordinates; and Lee paid for his talents and sincerity.† He had expected leave to

Anecdotes of General Charles Lee.

* Afterwards a major-general in the service of the United States.

† Few men have been more celebrated for neat *bon mots*, than General Charles Lee, and we have rarely known a gentleman who dealt more freely in biting sarcasm. The following anecdote is of the latter cast, and, with that above cited, was derived from General Gates. During his visit at Crown point, Captain Lee dined with a mess of

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spend the winter in the city of New York, but was remanded to Niagara, and to reach that post, he was obliged to make the circuit of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, and from the last place to traverse a wilderness of eighty leagues, by Le Bœuf and Presq' Isle; yet the General profited by Captain Lee's observations, and occupied the offensive knob with a strong redoubt, the stone revetement of which continues in pretty good condition.

Nevertheless, at the period of our retreat from Canada, the country to the westward being perfectly wild and uncultivated, and to the eastward but newly and thinly settled, we were obliged to draw our munitions of war of every species, from Albany and the New England states; if, then, we had in our diseased, enfeebled, and distracted state, attempted to hold possession of Crown point, we must on the approach of Sir Guy Carleton, have retired or been captured; because by his hords of Indians he could have cut off our communication with the interior, or turned our right, and taken post in our rear, as neither our numbers nor discipline warranted our meeting him in the field; but at the present day, should a national depôt be deemed necessary on the waters of Lake Champlain, (with a strong barrier post at Rouse's point) Crown point presents as suitable a site as any to be found, with the advantage of half finished works, which would save at least an hundred thousand dollars expense.

Immediately after the council, General Gates took command of the army, and returned to Ticonderoga, leaving

his brethren of the sword, and among them an officer, who had received a shot the preceding campaign on the plains of Abraham, directly in the forehead, which, from the circumstance of the ball being flattened and spent by some previous collision and the particular position of the head at the time, passed over the skull under the scalp, and was cut out at the occiput. To verify a fact so extraordinary, the ball was produced. In the course of the conversation which arose out of this incident, some one observed, that the officer who had been wounded, ought to transmit the ball to the Royal Society, as a subject of natural curiosity; on which Lee drily observed, "The skull must be a subject of more curious inquiry, and should accompany the ball."

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General Arnold at Crown point to bring up the rear, which was accomplished leisurely and by detachments, without interruption. Pending these movements, I projected a little enterprize that had for its object the capture of any reconnoitring party of the enemy, which might be sent in quest of us; it was my plan to descend the lake under cover of the night, with a couple of light batteaux and fifty men, to conceal myself during the day in creeks and inlets, and fall upon the rear of any scout which might follow the army. The boats were equipped under my particular attention, and the detachment selected; but, as the eastern troops to which I belonged had moved, the party was drawn from the Pennsylvania line, in consequence of which the officers objected to my command, and although supported by Arnold, I yielded my pretensions, on the ground of equity, to a Captain Wilson of Carlisle, who since lost his life in an electioneering fracas at that borough. This officer, impatient of success, adventured too far, and was intercepted in the river Sorel, near the Isle aux Noix, by Captain James H. Craig,* of the 47th British infantry, who had just embarked on a similar enterprize, with a superior force, composed of a detachment of troops and Indians. This incident furnishes one instance among many, wherein my disappointments have eventuated fortunately, and justified the adage that "*man may propose, but God will dispose;*" a reflection which has proved a never failing source of consolation, under the sorest afflictions of my life.

July 17. Project of Captain Wilkinson.

Captain Wilson fails in executing it.

In this place the reader may not be dissatisfied with a particular narrative of an adventure, which terminated very differently from that undertaken by Captain Wilson. The material fact has been recorded in history, and I shall now give the details, from my own knowledge and the information of the partisan.

Lieutenant Whitcomb, of Warner's regiment, an unlettered child of the woods from the frontier of the Hamp-

Lieutenant Whitcomb's en-

* Since a lieutenant-general in the British army and governor and captain-general of the Canadas.

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terprize, and Brig. Gen. Gordon's death.

shire grants, with all the little stratagems of an Indian, and a dauntless heart, had been selected for the service, and sent into Canada before General Gates's arrival, to take a prisoner, for the purpose of intelligence. Being well acquainted with his business, he chose one man only for the companion of his enterprize,* who he informed me, either deserted him or got lost before he reached the ultimate point of his march. Proceeding down the west side of Lake Champlain. Whitcomb turned St. John's on his right, and approaching Chamblée late in the night, unintentionally crept within the chain of sentinels of a newly formed encampment. He was hailed, and found himself surrounded before he discovered his situation. The ground had not been cleared, and the surface was thickly covered with the sprouts of the scrubby oak, or black jack, little more than knee high. Encircled and closely pressed by the soldiery in quest of him, who in the dark were scattered in every direction, his immediate escape became impracticable; in this extremity he suddenly prostrated himself among the bushes, and distinctly heard the observations and inquiries of his pursuers respecting him; turning on his back, with his knife he cut detached twigs which he found within his reach, and sticking them carelessly in the ground around him, before day his person was concealed, and in this position he continued motionless until the following night, when he made his escape, by crawling on the earth. He informed me, that in the course of the day, the soldiery frequently passed and repassed within six feet of him, and an officer very nearly rode over him; but the greatest danger of his being discovered arose from clearing off the ground, which was pushed within twenty feet of him the next day, when the retreat called off the fatigue.

Having regained the forest, Whitcomb concealed himself a few days, until the alarm he had occasioned sub-

* Numbers betray movements, particularly in forests, where the pressure of the grass and the rumpling of the leaves, will enable an experienced hand to track either man or beast with facility.

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sided, and he then ambuscaded the road leading from Chamblée to St. John's, at a point from whence his eye commanded an extensive view up and down. Here he expected to intercept some unsuspicious passenger.

The hard fortune of Brigadier-general Gordon of the British army, led him the same morning to take a solitary ride, and his approach was discovered by Whitcomb, soon after he had taken his stand. The General was in full uniform, his epaulets rich, he might have a gold watch and money about him, and he appeared to be a great chief. The time for our partisan's return was at hand, and it was uncertain whether he could make a prisoner, and if he did, being alone, it would be difficult to conduct him in. This reasoning was too powerful for Whitcomb's sense of morals and humanity; he determined to disobey his orders, and marked his victim. The road brought Gordon within thirty feet of Whitcomb's ambuscade; he presented, took aim, covered his object, and kept his sight on him until he got a side view of his back; he then fired, and the ball took effect under the right shoulder blade, but the wound, though mortal, did not produce sudden death, and the General's horse carried him into St. John's, where he soon after expired.—*Thus the assassin missed his spoil!!!*

That Whitcomb believed he was performing a meritorious act, is clearly evinced by his reporting it with exultation; for it would otherwise have been impossible ever to have convicted him of it. In speaking of the adventure, he gave me the preceding details, and added that he "*lost his object by shooting Gordon a little too high, owing to the accidental intervention of a fluttering leaf, in the instant he pulled trigger.*"

This abominable outrage on the customs of war and the laws of humanity, produced a sensation of strong disgust in the army, and men of sensibility and honour did not conceal their abhorrence of its perpetrator. Yet it was impossible, in the temper of the times, to bring him to punishment, without disaffecting the fighting men on that whole frontier.

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But if he could not be punished consistently with sound policy, yet his promotion to a majority the ensuing winter, not only sanctioned the murder but rewarded the murderer.—*Such are the dreadful demoralizing effects of war, and more particularly of a civil war!!!*

Arrest of Colonel Hazen, by General Arnold.

Soon after the arrival of the troops at Ticonderoga, a private animosity which had long subsisted between General Arnold and Colonel Hazen, burst into a flame and produced the arrest of the Colonel, on a charge which favoured more of personal resentment, than a sense of public duty. A general court martial was ordered for his trial, of which Colonel Enoch Poor was president, and in the course of the inquiry, a controversy arose between the court and General Arnold, who appeared as prosecutor, which produced the following communications:—

General Arnold to the General Court Martial.

General Arnold's controversy with the general court martial.

"As the court have refused accepting my principal evidence, Major Scott,* after having declared to them on honour, that he had punctually obeyed my orders, respecting the goods he had in charge from Montreal to Chamblée, and of course is not at all interested in the event of Colonel Hazen's trial, I do solemnly protest against their proceedings and refusal as unprecedented, and I think unjust.

"B. ARNOLD, *Brig. Gen.*

"*Ticonderoga, Aug. 2d, 1776.*"

Whereupon the court determined, that "this protest appears to them illegal, illiberal, and ungentleman-like: for these reasons they have objected to its entry, and refuse the same." The court moreover direct the president to demand satisfaction of the General, which was done in the following terms:

* The Captain Scott who had charge of the plundered goods, being reduced, I have understood, he afterwards joined the enemy in New York.

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To Brigadier-general Arnold.

"*Ticonderoga, Aug. 3d*, 1776.

"Sir,

"As you have evidently called in question not only the honour, but the justice likewise of this court, by the illiberal protest you have exhibited, the court have directed me, and as president of this court I esteem it my duty, to inform you that you have drawn upon yourself their just indignation, and that nothing but an open acknowledgment of your errors will be received as satisfactory.

"By order of the court,

"ENOCH POOR, *Col. & Pres't.*"

To which General Arnold made the following reply:

"*Ticonderoga, Aug. 4th*, 1776.

"Gentlemen,

"The very extraordinary vote of the court and directions given to the president, and his still more extraordinary demand, are in my opinion ungenteel and indecent reflections on a superior officer, which the nature and words of my protest will by no means justify; nor was it designed as they have construed it. I am not very conversant with courts martial, but this I will venture to say, they are composed of men not infallible; even you may have erred.—Congress will judge between us; to whom I will desire the general to transmit the proceedings of this court. This I can assure you, I shall ever, in public or in private, be ready to support the character of a man of honour; and as your very *nice* and *delicate* honour in your apprehension is injured, you may depend as soon as this disagreeable service is at an end (which God grant may soon be the case), I will by no means withhold from any gentleman of the court, the satisfaction his *nice honour* may require.—Your demand I shall not comply with.

"B. ARNOLD.

"*To the Court Martial.*"

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CHAP. II. On the receipt of this letter, the court addressed Major-general Gates:

"*Ticonderoga, Aug. 6th*, 1776.

"Sir,

"We do not make any doubt of your having heard that this court has taken umbrage, at some part of General Arnold's behaviour in the course of his prosecution of Colonel Hazen. We are sensible men of rank should be treated with delicacy; we are also sensible, that it is our duty to maintain the dignity and authority of the court martial; and that an attempt to lessen the one or render the other contemptible is proportionally a greater offence, as the person is in a station more elevated, and that passing over such attempts must have the worst effects on the discipline of the army.

"We know we have power to compel parties before us to decent behaviour, and to punish insults offered to us. 'Tis a power incident to courts, and without which they would be ridiculous and nugatory. 'Tis a power we wish not to exercise in the case of General Arnold especially. A power however we must use in his case, unless he gives this court the satisfaction they have demanded. Justice to the army and to our country, require it of us. The case is shortly this:—A witness was offered to the court to support the charge brought by General Arnold against Colonel Hazen, to whom exception was taken, that he was interested in the event of the trial, and therefore not admissible. The court, after hearing the allegations of both parties, adjudged that he was interested, and rejected him. Other witnesses were called, and the trial went on. After some time, General Arnold again pressed for the admission of the above witness, at the same time observing to the court, that he would enter a protest on their minutes unless his request should be granted;—he was refused. He then offered his protest against our proceedings, couched we think in indecent terms, and directly impeaching the justice of the court. If he thought by his protest to stop the proceedings, he

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certainly has not considered how far that practice would lead. If either party has a right to stop the proceedings by protest, both parties must have the same right, and then there needs nothing more to screen every offender from punishment; and, on the other hand, it would expose a person, who might have the misfortune to be obnoxious to his superior officer, to perpetual persecution; —however conscious of his innocence, in vain would he expect redress from a general court martial; for in the moment of a well founded expectation of an honourable acquittal, a protest appears and blasts it all, and sends him back to his room a melancholy prisoner. But on the contrary, if his design was no more, than by an entry of his protest on our minutes, to operate against the justice and equity of our proceedings, we must and do consider ourselves as an improper conveyance to our superiors of that protest, which was so replete with crimination and abuse. We could add, that the illiberal sentiments of the protest was not the only injury offered us: the whole of the General's conduct during the trial, was marked with contempt and disrespect towards the court; and by his extraordinary answer, he has added injury to insult.

We have mentioned these things, that you might know what were our motives in this matter; and our principal design is this, that through you General Arnold may know the light in which we have seen this matter, which we flatter ourselves you will readily see the propriety of, and from the regard you have for the honour, the discipline, and subordination of the army, you will not by a sudden dissolution, put it out of our power to obtain that satisfaction we are entitled to.

"By order of the court.

"ENOCH POOR, *Col. & Pres't.*

"*To Major-general Gates,*
Comd'g the Northern Army."

On the receipt of this letter, General Gates, who balanced between the policy of justifying the court or protecting General Arnold, determined in favour of the lat-

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ter; the court was immediately dissolved, and Arnold the following day was appointed to command the squadron proposed for the defence of the lake.

The occurrences on this trial, from its origin to its close, present a very melancholy series of examples, to show how feeble are the barriers of law, against the influence or the partialities of men possessing powers over which there is no controul. The example of those transactions and of some others, appear to have had a most unhappy influence on the military jurisprudence of the United States. In this work there will be found more than one case of a similar character, in which the private passions and particular influence of men intrusted with honourable command, have prevailed with wrong on their side over every principle of constitution, justice, and disregard of honour. The annexed letter will exhibit a specimen of the mode in which usurpation secretly conducts its operations, and blinks at the public credulity, which presumes that all things are fair and above board.

Extract of a letter from Major-general Gates to his Excellency John Hancock, esq. President of the General Congress, dated Ticonderoga, Sept. 2d, 1776.

"By this conveyance your excellency will receive a large packet containing the proceedings of a general court martial, held by my order upon Colonel Hazen, upon a complaint exhibited by Brigadier-general Arnold. The warmth of General Arnold's temper might possibly lead him a litte further than is marked by the received line of decorum to be observed before and towards a court martial. Seeing and knowing all circumstances, I am convinced if there was a fault on one side, there was too much acrimony on the other. Here again I was obliged to act DICTATORIALLY, and dissolve the court martial the instant they demanded General Arnold to be put in arrest. The United States must not be deprived of that excellent officer's services at this important moment. I wish your excellency would represent this affair in *the most favourable light to Congress.* Upon such *occasions,* there is a way

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to *satisfy complaints* without *publicly disgracing* those complained of, especially when a general officer of acknowledged merit is a party concerned."

Such was the popularity Arnold had acquired by his abortive enterprize across the wilderness, from Kennebeck to the St. Lawrence; fruitful only in the sufferings and sacrifice of many brave men;—such the effect of popular influence on military power, that in this instance, the principles of justice were subverted, and the best interests of the army sacrificed: and, as our system of military jurisprudence, under the management of arbitrary chiefs and despotic ministers, still continues to be little more than a mockery, the respect and the regard which I bear the profession of my early choice, degraded as it has been by President Madison, from the lofty ground of characteristic frankness and punctilious honour, to the base level of his own corrupt intrigues and hideous hypocrisy, will induce me, for the information of the honourable and ingenuous who still wear the sword, to hazard a brief analysis of the relative powers of general courts martial and the constituent authority.

Exposition of the relative power of general courts martial and the constituent authority.

A general court martial, a tribunal of the highest military jurisdiction, ought always to be attended by orderly officers and a guard, proportioned to its rank and the solemnity of the inquiry, for the preservation of order and the maintenance of decorum, the escort of prisoners, and the service of precepts. These officers and guards are to a court martial what the sheriff and his subordinates are to a court of civil jurisdiction, and the former court possesses the same power over military persons, whether prisoners, prosecutors, or witnesses, and over all bystanders, civil or military, who misconduct themselves in its presence, as the latter has over all persons conducting themselves improperly, under similar circumstances. Whilst in session, the powers of general courts martial, within the limits of their jurisdiction, are supreme and absolute, and they may arrest and place under guard any person whatever, who shall presume to come before them and behave irreverently.

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This right, which is of great antiquity, is deduced from natural reason—is founded in the necessity of the case, and is indispensable to the end of justice; without this self protection, a court would be liable not only to insult, menace and obstruction in its proceedings, but to be biassed in its deliberations and deterred from the exercise of its judgment. It appertains, at the same time, to the appointing power, to dissolve general courts martial in any stage of their proceedings, which is essential to the entire responsibility of a chief; but the exercise of this authority "*pendente lite*," is a measure of extreme delicacy, and should never be resorted to, except in circumstances of imperious and justifiable necessity, such as the pressure of an enemy, sudden movements, battles, and a dispersion of the corps; or it may become necessary for the repression of factious, licentious, and seditious proceedings, to which prejudiced and corrupt tribunals are liable:—a disgraceful instance of this kind occurred under the orders of Brigadier-general Hampton, at the Washington cantonment, in the Mississippi territory, in the case of Captain Winfield Scott, which inflicted a deep wound on the fundamental principles of subordination and discipline.

But in our government, where the rule of conduct is prescribed by the laws, and not by the arbitrary will of an individual, no officer, be his rank what it may, possesses the right to *deny* an arrest; and the act would in itself be a dangerous usurpation: in such a case, the denial of justice might amount to the commission of injustice, and the assumption of power would annul the law* martial, and make the breast of the commander the sole depository of military justice; it would sanction abuses of every kind, and subvert the foundations of subordination and discipline. Extraordinary events, which require every head and every hand for the defence of the

* The 77th article of war declares, "whenever an officer shall be charged with a crime, he shall be arrested and confined in his barracks, quarters, or tent, and deprived of his sword by his commanding officer."

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state, will warrant the *suspension* of an arrest; but no circumstance can occur to justify a refusal. Yet it will be seen in the third volume of this work, by the testimony of that right worthy man, Major Nicoll, formerly adjutant and inspector general, that President Madison, who has always been so ready to hang me up, on the devices of his own heart or the fictions of others, did authorise the suppression of an arrest prepared for Brigadier-general Hampton; he treated the offender with courtesy, indulged his caprices, and finally suffered him to resign his commission and escape the justice of his country; although his secretary of war, General Armstrong, stood pledged to me, as will also be seen in these sheets, that Hampton should be brought to an inquiry for his conduct in command; after which, our virtuous President made no hesitation to arrest and rob me of command *for a year, on the secret slanders of a band of informers, who sought my destruction for their own emolument, and have not dared to shew their faces.*

Tyranny and injustice of President Madison exemplified.

Our military code is extremely defective. An attempt was made to revise it in 1806, when it was made worse; and at best it is but a servile copy of the British articles of war. On a cursory view it strikes me, that the procedure of British naval courts martial is suited to the principles and spirit of our government, and, suitably modified, would be well adapted to our service. British naval courts martial not only arraign and try the prisoner, but they pass final judgment, without reference to any power whatever; and it appears unreasonable, that the judgment of thirteen honourable men, acting under an oath, should be set aside by an individual at his discretion, who is a stranger to the sensibilities of a sailor or soldier, is controuled by no sensible obligation, and never read a word of law. This system would also protect the service against the ignorance and brutality of arbitrary, upstart, immoral commanders, of whom I cannot convey my idea in a more concise manner, than by a reference to my general order of 15th December, 1815, and the cruel treatment of Captain Joseph Treat, of the

Remark on the defects of our military code.

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late 21st regiment United States infantry, as set forth in a pamphlet published by him in Philadelphia, 1815, in which he invokes the justice of the cold hearted President Madison without effect.*

The site of Ticonderoga described.

I will now resume my narrative, with a short description of Ticonderoga, which is situate about fifteen miles south of Crown point, and about thirty north of Skeensborough, where Wood creek falls into Lake Champlain. It is formed by a sharp angle in the narrow waters of the lake and an arm of that lake stretching to the westward, which receives the waters of Lake George, at the foot of a precipitous fall of about twenty feet. The stream which connects these lakes makes a considerable curvature to the west, and in the distance of two miles tumbles over successive strata of rocks about three hundred feet, the difference of the level between the surface of Lake George and that of Lake Champlain, furnishing a variety of excellent mill sites, accessible to the navigable waters of Lake George, forty miles, and to those of Champlain and the river Sorel, about one hundred and thirty miles.

This position was fortified by the French long before the war of 1756. The work which has been described, was commanded on three sides; but is rendered famous

July 8, 1758.

by the repulse of General Abercrombie, with the loss of near 2000 men in killed and wounded, although he might, by taking possession of a neighbouring height, called Mount Defiance, have carried the place without hazarding a man. This operation bears, in its improvidence and consequences, a more close resemblance to the enterprize of General Packenham before New Orleans, than any event which has occurred in the history of North America, whether viewed in relation to the blind temerity of the attack, the disparity of the force engaged, the gallantry displayed by the combatants, the comparative loss on either side, and the immediate results of the repulse.†

* See Appendix, No. V.

† Before New Orleans, the British force was estimated at 12,000 men, and the American at 3,500. At Ticonderoga the British force

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Let the inexperienced commander profit by such senseless audacity; let him reflect, that although rashness may sometimes succeed against a self-confident, unwary antagonist, it cannot be justified but in desperate cases, such as the straits of Thermopylæ, where the fate of a nation was at hazard, or where he is left without alternative, and by possible success may gain much, but by probable discomfiture can lose little. Such enterprizes may be compared to deep play, by which a gambler may advance his fortune but cannot injure it. General Wolfe's attack upon Quebec, General Washington's enterprize against Trenton, and Bonaparte's invasion of Italy by Mount St. Gothard, were all rash undertakings, unwarrantable but by the exigent circumstances which produced them. In the first instance, Montcalm failed in vigilance, or it would have been impossible for General

consisted of 6,000 regular troops and 10,000 provincials, and the French were estimated at 1,000 troops of the line and 1,500 Canadian peasantry. In both cases the British suffered great slaughter, and in neither was the loss of the French or Americans, deemed worthy of historical record.

CONTRAST.

Loss of British army before Ticonderoga, July 8th, 1758, under Major-general Abercrombie.

	Regulars.			*Prov'ls*		
	K.	W.	M	K	W	M
Brig. Generals	1			1		
Cols. and Lt. Cols.	2				3	
Majors	4	2		1		
Captains	5	26			6	
Lieutenants	10	28	2	5	9	
Ensigns	5	9			1	
Engineers	1					
Adjutants		1		1		
Quarter-masters	1	1				
Sergeants	14	44	1	4	15	1
Rank & file, and drummers	424	1006	27	75	206	8
Total	467	1117	30	87	240	9

Total regulars and provincials 1950

Loss of British army before N. Orleans, Jan. 8th, 1814, under Major-gen. Packenham.

	Regulars.		
	K	W.	M.
Major-generals	1	2	
Lt. Colonels	1	3	
Majors	2	2	
Captains	5	18	3
Lieutenants	2	38	12
Ensigns	2	9	
Staff		1	
Sergeants	11	54	13
Drummers	1	9	4
Rank & file	266	1126	452
Total	291	1262	484

Total 2037

Extracted from Knox's Historical Journal, p. 152. and the Dep Adjt. General's return, transmitted by Major-general Lambert to his government.

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Wolfe to have climbed the heights of Abraham; in the second, Rahl and his officers, beguiled by a false confidence, were sleeping after a debauch, or General Washington would not have surprised him, and the Hessian could have retreated on Princeton or Bordentown; and still more extraordinary, in the last case, Melas, wrapt in security, suffered Bonaparte to pass the critical defiles of the mountains, and to choose his ground on the plains of Italy without molestation, and finally, by giving himself up to victory, lost the battle of Marengo.

French lines, and General Abercrombie's attack of them.

When the French officer who commanded at Ticonderoga heard of General Abercrombie's approach, he found it necessary to the defence of the post, to take possession of an elevated ridge on the direct route to it, from the landing at Lake George, which, at less than half a mile, entirely overlooked the works. This ridge is flat on the summit, and extends westwardly about half a mile to the saw mills at the perpendicular fall before mentioned, where it terminates in still higher ground, called Mount Hope. On the south it presents a bold acclivity, washed by the strait, and to the north it declines until it sinks into a plain, which is extended about an hundred rods to the shore of the lake, where the bank is ten or twelve feet high; across the crown of this ridge, at the extremity nearest the fort, the garrison hastily threw up an intrenchment with a common ditch judiciously flanked, which was strengthened by felling the forest trees in front outwards, and these they trimmed, pointed, and formed into an impervious abbatis, sixty or eighty rods deep, in which the assailants became entangled, and were deliberately shot down; until after repeated attempts, during four hours, in which the most persevering resolution was displayed, they were called off, and the army immediately retreated without molestation.

July 17, 1776.

As soon as the rear of our army got up from Crown point, and the camp was pitched, our labours were directed to the improvement of the old French lines, and the erection of new works on the same side of the lake, and also on Mount Independence, which is separated from Ticonderoga by a strait about 80 poles wide; at the same time

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shipwrights were drawn from our sea-ports, and every exertion put in operation for the construction and equipment of an armed flotilla; the chief command* of which, as has been remarked, was conferred on General Arnold, who immediately entered upon the active duties of the station; and I embraced the occasion to retire from his family, and was appointed a major of brigade to the troops destined to take possession of Mount Independence, where I pitched my tent amidst its native forest.

July 30. By great industry two schooners and several smaller vessels, were soon got ready for service, and fell down the lake to Crown point, and were followed by others, as fast as they could be equipped and manned. General Arnold took the immediate command of the squadron, under particular instructions, and, transformed into a commodore, hoisted his broad pendant on board the schooner Royal Savage, mounting eight 6 and four 4 pounders with ten swivels and fifty men; and sailed down the lake with ten sail, to keep a look out for the enemy, to train his landsmen to naval service, and to manœuvre his little squadron, but under positive orders from General Gates not to proceed "*below the narrow pass formed by the Isle aux Tetes and the opposite shore,*" and to run no "*wanton risk.*" Two gondolas joined him the beginning of September, and three heavy gallies the beginning of October. General Arnold's respect for his orders, and his competency to the trust reposed in him, will be seen in the result.

Aug. 16. General Arnold takes command of the fleet.

Aug. 24.

General Gates's instructions to Brig. Gen. Arnold.

"*Orders and instructions for the Hon. Benedict Arnold, esq. Brigadier-general in the army of the United States of America.*

"Upon your arrival at Crown point, you will proceed with the fleet of the United States under your command,

* General Arnold's condescension in giving up the right wing of the army for that of our flotilla, was ascribed to the following causes: 1st. His enterprizing spirit, which seldom calculated chances; 2d. His impatience of command; 3d. His thirst for personal fame; and 4th. His unpopularity with the army at that period.

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down Lake Champlain to the narrow pass of the lake made by Isle aux Tetes* and the opposite shore. You will station the fleet in the best manner to maintain the possession of those passes, according as your judgment shall determine, cautiously avoiding to place the vessels in a manner which might unnecessarily expose them to the enemy's heavy artillery from the shore.

"You will most religiously observe that it is my positive order, that you do not command the fleet to sail below the pass of the Isle aux Tetes above mentioned, incessantly reflecting, that the preventing the enemy's invasion of our country, is the ultimate end of the important command with which you are now intrusted. It is a defensive war we are carrying on; therefore *no wanton risk* or unnecessary display of the power of the fleet, is at any time to influence your conduct. Should the enemy come up the lake, and attempt to force their way through the pass you are stationed to defend, in that case you will act with such cool determined valour as will give them reason to repent their temerity. But if, contrary to my hope and expectation, their fleet should have so increased as to force an entrance within the upper part of the lake, then after you shall have discovered the insufficiency of every effort to retard their progress, you will in the best manner you can, retire with your squadron to Ticonderoga. Every vessel in the fleet being furnished with a batteau, you will have it in your power to keep out *scout* boats at night, and occasionally to annoy the enemy's small craft. In the day time your boats can act when opportunity offers, under cover of the cannon of the fleet.

"As the most honourable the Congress of the United States, rest a great dependence on your wise and prudent conduct in the management of this fleet, you will, on no *account detach yourself from it,* upon the lesser services

* No such islands are to be found in any modern map; but the direction must have been intended for the Split Rock, where, by the bye, the lake is ten times as wide as it is generally represented to be.

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above mentioned. A resolute but judicious defence of the northern entrance into this side of the continent, is the momentous part which is committed to your courage and abilities. I doubt not that you will secure it from further invasion.

"As I am entirely unacquainted with maritime affairs, I shall not presume to give any directions respecting the duty and discipline of the seamen and marines on board the fleet. I have traced the great outline of that service, which your country expects from the rank and character you have acquired.

"I have, as is my duty, *fixed the limits beyond which you are not to go*; but you must communicate that restriction to nobody. I wish on the contrary, that words occasionally dropped from you, with that prudence which excludes every sort of affectation, and which, I believe, you possess, may, together with all your motions, induce our own people to conclude it is our real intention to invade the enemy, which after all may happen; it will keep up their spirits without affecting your reputation, whatever may be the event.

"It only remains for me to recommend you to the protection of that Power, upon whose mercy we place our hopes of freedom here and happiness hereafter.

"You will frequently report the state and situation of your fleet, and of every interesting occurrence.

"Given at Ticonderoga this 7th day of August, 1776.

"HORATIO GATES, *Maj. Gen.*

"*Brig. Gen Arnold.*"

I remained with the brigade on Mount Independence, until the beginning of September, when Brigadier-general de Roche Fermoy took command of it, and I was transferred to that able but unfortunate officer, General St. Clair, to whose instruction I am much indebted for my principles of service and knowledge of details. He had been introduced at an early age into the Royal American or 60th British regiment, and during the seven year's war, had seen a great deal of active service under

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A glance at General St. Clair's military life.

distinguished commanders. He served at the taking of Louisburgh under General Amherst, and the next campaign carried a pair of colours on the plains of Abraham, the day General Wolfe bartered his life for *deathless renown*. The native ingenuity, liberal education, literary taste, and polished address of Ensign St. Clair, could not escape the observation of the conqueror of Canada, and his able coadjutors, Moncton, Townshend, and Murray; and the circumstance of their attentions enlarged his sphere of information, and gave scope to his genius and dispositions. After the peace of '63, he sold out and entered into trade, for which the generosity of his nature utterly disqualified him; he, of course, soon became disgusted with a profitless pursuit, and having married, after several vicissitudes of fortune, he located himself in Ligonier valley, west of the Alleghany mountain, and near the ancient route from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh. In this situation the American revolution found him, surrounded by a rising family, in the enjoyment of ease and independence, with the fairest prospects of affluent fortune, the foundation of which had been already established by his intelligence, industry and enterprize. From this peaceful abode, these sweet domestic enjoyments and the flattering prospects which accompanied them, he was drawn by the claims of a troubled country. A man known to have been a military officer, and distinguished for knowledge and integrity, could not, in those times,* be concealed even by his favourite mountains, and therefore, without application or expectation on his part, he received the commission of a colonel in the month of December, 1775, together with a letter from President Hancock, pressing him to repair immediately to Philadelphia. He obeyed the summons, and took leave not only of his wife and children, but in effect of his fortune, to embark

* Such was our ignorance of arms in those days, that a knowledge of the manual exercise, gave a man importance; and I knew two British deserters, Box and Johnson, who were made majors of brigade because of their supposed knowledge of details.

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in the cause of liberty and the united colonies. In six weeks he completed the levy of a regiment of 750 men; six companies of which marched in season to join our troops before Quebec; he followed with the other four in May, and after the unlucky affair at Three Rivers, by his counsel to General Sullivan at Sorel, he saved the army we had in Canada. Subsequently to these events, he rose to the rank of major-general, and was honoured with the confidence and friendship of General Washington to the day of his death. At Trenton he saved the army by the flank movement to the right, which he recommended in council on the night of the 2d Jan. 1777; and at Ticonderoga, in the same year, I beheld him rising superior to the selfish obligations which fetter mankind; and by preferring the safety of the army confided to his charge, to the *bloody honours* which were within his reach, he *voluntarily* plunged himself into the gulf of popular detraction. Well do I remember his reply to me, when deploring the necessity of our retreat: "*It must be so my boy. 'Tis not in mortals to command success, but we'll do more, we will deserve it.' I know I could save my character by sacrificing the army; but were I to do so, I should forfeit that which the world could not restore, and which it cannot take away, the approbation of my own conscience.*" What a noble sentiment! Can such services and sacrifices be balanced by *pelf?* and is it meet that such a patriot should be suffered to drag out a tedious term of old age in indigence, and be buried in obscurity? Do such glaring neglects comport with the liberality and beneficence of an enlightened Christian people? Are they consistent with justice and sound policy? Reason and humanity revolt against these propositions! and it is hoped, that the virtue and good sense of the people, which when spontaneously exerted seldom err, may be actively interposed to rescue the country from the sin of ingratitude, and the shame of neglecting those faithful citizens, whose whole time has been devoted to the public service. A contrary course pursued by the agents of the govern-

July 6, 1777.

Reflections on services and rewards,

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and the effects of public ingratitude.

ment, has already tarnished the character of the republic, and, if persisted in, will sap the foundations of patriotism, convert the military into mercenaries, and the civil functionaries into sordid speculators; and instead of a magnanimous policy, the views of our public councils will be contracted to the narrow circle of selfish interest; and then the love of our country, and our administration of its constitution, will yield to avaricious passions and ambitious projects, and like our primitive parents, and every people who have gone before us, we shall forfeit for a shadow, the solid blessings prepared for us by an indulgent Creator.

Whilst actively engaged in the duties of my station—while every hand was employed in preparing for the reception of the enemy, and every heart panted for the rencontre, I was suddenly struck down by a typhus fever which prevailed with great violence, and swept off more than one thousand of our troops. Disappointment and chagrin exasperated my disease, until it was considered necessary to remove me to the south end of Lake George, under the personal attendance of Doctor Jonathan Potts, the surgeon-general. There, in spite of medical art, I was reduced to the last extremity; every hope of my recovery had expired; I was consigned to the grave, and a coffin was prepared for my accommodation. Life trembled over the verge of eternity—the immortal spirit had fled its mortal tabernacle, but returned again "*as loth to quit its hold*," and after a most severe struggle, my youth and constitution prevailed. As soon as I could bear the motion of a wagon, I insisted on being removed from the scenes of mortality which surrounded me, and placed on a bed, was transported to Albany, where, I must be pardoned the expression of my gratitude, I was restored to health by the fostering care of the late P. Van Renssalaer, esq. and his amiable lady, and the tender attentions of General Schuyler and his respectable consort. But I did not recover my wonted strength until the spring, although I bore my part in a winter campaign, the most distressing and the most important of my country.

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Being forced from the scene of operations by the hand of Heaven, what I shall say of the subsequent events of the campaign of 1776, in the northern department, is founded on information derived from correct sources, and my own knowledge of the topography of the country.

General Arnold's naval operations.

After sailing from Crown point, General Arnold, notwithstanding his instructions, put no limits to his cruise, and about the middle of Sept. he was apprised of the superiority of the enemy's squadron, by one of his own spies;* but as this information did not accord with his desires, he on the report of a couple of imposters, who *pretended* they had reconnoitred the Isle aux Noix, converted the faithful agent into "*a spy for the enemy,*" and sent him in irons to General Gates, by whom he was transferred to the public prison in Albany. This incident may serve as a warning to military men, to guard against their passions and prejudices, in estimating the reports of secret intelligencers. On the 9th of October his squadron consisted of three schooners and one sloop, carrying six and four pounders, eight gondolas or gun boats, with twelve and nine pounders, and three gallies bearing three or

* Extract of a letter from Brigadier-general Arnold to Major-general Gates.

"This morning (Sept. 16.) at one o'clock, Antoine Gerouse, alias Gerard, a Frenchman *whom I sent to St. John's*, returned, and gives the following account, viz. that at Isle aux Noix there are three thousand troops encamped, and forty pieces of cannon mounted on their lines; at St. John's three thousand men, one hundred and fifty batteaux, and he was told that two hundred were at Chamblée; that two schooners are completed and manned, one mounting twelve and the other fourteen brass six pounders; small vessels on the stocks to carry three guns each, one gondola taken from us and three new ones built, these to mount three guns each; a number of flat-bottomed boats to carry one gun each, and a floating battery with two masts, nearly done, to carry twenty-four eighteen pounders and two mortars. He imagines the whole will be completed in a fortnight. *I think him placed as a spy on us*—have sent him to you to be disposed of as you think proper. From the accounts of the two men who have viewed Isle aux Noix, the account of the Frenchman must be false, and a story formed for him by the English officers."

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four eighteen pounders each, with which he determined to risk a battle against any force the enemy could produce. On this day he formed a line abreast, in the narrow pass between the south-west end of Valcour island and the main, and came to anchor, his flanks being secured by the opposite shores. By this disposition he betrayed apprehensions of his inferiority, but at the same time manifested his desperate purpose, to encounter an enemy of whose force he had no correct information, and of which he could not in fact obtain any certain knowledge, under the circumstances in which he had placed himself, before they were nearly along side of him, and had gained a station precisely between him and his retreat. The following brief description may contribute to satisfy the reader's inquiry: Valcour island, about fifty miles below Crown point, is the same under which I sheltered myself from a heavy gale, and is shaped like a trapezium, extending lengthwise about a couple of miles north-east and south-west, in the widest part of Lake Champlain, but lies so close in with the western shore, that in ascending the lake, it may readily be mistaken for a projection from the main. Looking towards Canada, Arnold had withdrawn himself behind this island, and so near to the main, that he could not be discovered by the enemy, before they had turned the southern point of it, and then it was by accident,* or their squadron would have left him behind.

Oct. 9.

May 20.

Early on the morning of the 11th of October, Arnold's guard boats warned him of the approach of the enemy, under a press of sail with a fresh breeze from the north-west. He had before shifted his flag from the Royal Savage to the Congress galley, and immediately ordered those vessels and the other gallies under way, and stood out to meet the enemy; but on discovering their force, he made signal to regain the line, which he had left at anchor, and in beating up, the schooner being partially

* See Annual Register 1777, p. 4.

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engaged, received some damage and was run ashore on the island, and afterwards burnt by the enemy, whose squadron* consisted of a ship of eighteen 12 pounders, one schooner of fourteen and another of twelve 6 pounders, a radeau carrying six 24 pounders with six 12 pounders, besides two howitzers, a gondola with seven 9 pounders, twenty gun boats carrying brass field pieces from 9 to 24 pounders, and some long boats armed in the same manner; the whole manned with 700 prime seamen, and the guns served by men and officers detached from the corps of Royal Artillery. I would ask, should an officer have been excused for committing himself to such a vast superiority? But here, as at Chippewa and Bridgewater, and Fort Erie, *personal fame, and not the public cause, was contended for, and, to use a vulgar but appropriate phrase, a butcher's bill was to varnish military follies, and justify the wanton waste of human life.*

On discovering Arnold's line, the enemy, who was running up the lake mid-channel, hauled his wind, and by beating up and occasionally rowing to windward, he was enabled about half after twelve, to form a line parallel to Arnold, at about 350 yards, with the schooner Carleton and the gun boats; and some distance in the rear of those, the ship and other heavy vessels came to anchor, the wind preventing their nearer approach. The action then commenced, and was supported until night, with great spirit and considerable loss on both sides. We had sixty men killed and wounded in this affair; the loss of the enemy has not been ascertained, but he suffered considerably, as his front vessels fell to leeward to repair, and at the close of day, not one of them was within six hundred yards of us.† At night fall the wind,

* See Annual Register 1777, p. 3.

† During the action the enemy landed large bodies of Indians on the island and the main, who fired on our vessels without effect: he also embarked 1000 men on board of batteaux, to be ready to cut us up, should we be driven on shore. The gondola Philadelphia was sunk; the Congress galley was hulled twelve times, receiving seven shot between wind and water, and the Washington did not fare bet-

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which had been high throughout the day, subsided into a gentle breeze, still from the north-west. General Arnold convened his captains on board the Congress, and after a consultation it was determined to attempt a retreat. Some of the council were for hauling round the island, through the narrow pass, but Arnold decided on attempting a passage directly through the enemy's line, as the only practicable means of escape, which was conducted in the following manner.

The Trumbull galley commanded by a Colonel Wigglesworth of the Massachusetts militia, led the retreat with barely sail enough set to give her steerage way, and a lanthorn under her stern, so masked as not to be seen except by those directly in her wake, and the rest of the squadron followed in succession, equipped in the same manner with lanthorns, at intervals of two or three hundred yards; General Waterbury of Connecticut, and General Arnold, in the Congress and Washington gallies, bringing up the rear. The night was profoundly dark, and the atmosphere was charged with a heavy fog; strict silence and stillness was enjoined, and we passed the enemy's line, without seeing one of his vessels or being ourselves perceived. About eight o'clock the next morning the fog was dissipated, and we were discovered about twelve or fifteen miles ahead of the enemy, who were preparing to follow us. It was now a dead calm, and a signal was made to the Trumbull and all the smaller vessels, to ply their oars, and make the best of their way to Crown point; but before noon the wind sprung up ahead from the south-west, and blew a light gale until midnight. Arnold attempted to beat up, but finding he could make no hand of it, came to anchor. The Trumbull galley and the greatest number of the small craft, had inclined to the western coast, and were five or six miles ahead,

ter. They were wounded in their masts and yards; for want of expert gunners, General Arnold, in person, directed the greater part of his shot. It was a desperate conflict on our part, and the wind and our proximity to the shore, saved us from capture or destruction.

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when the breeze commenced, but several of the largest of the gun boats were struck by it, and driven into the lake, and two or three were forced on the eastern shore, where they were abandoned and destroyed; the galley and four of the squadron continued their course up the lake.

At sun-rise the next morning the fog was so thick, that a vessel could not be discerned a cable's length; but between eight and nine o'clock it cleared off, and the enemy's squadron was discovered getting under way, with a fresh breeze from the north-west, which brought up their leading vessels within five miles of us, before we felt its influence, and before eleven o'clock the ship and schooners were within range of our stern chases, two long 18 pounders, which were opened upon them, and kept up a constant fire. General Waterbury, in the Washington galley, had been ordered to keep abreast of the Congress, and to co-operate with his battery, which was of equal weight; but he suffered a schooner to run under his stern, and struck to her without firing a gun. By this dastardly act, Arnold was exposed to the broadsides of the schooner, the battery of the captured galley, and the bow chases of the ship and other schooner; and thus beset by dreadful odds, he passed the narrows at Split Rock, continuing the action until he found his vessel made water fast, that others were almost sinking, and that no chance for escape remained, he then ran his own galley and four gun boats ashore in a cove,* on the eastern coast of the lake, and set them on fire, but ordered the colours not to be struck; and as they grounded, the marines were directed to jump overboard, with their arms and accoutrements, to ascend a bank about twenty-five feet elevation, and form a line for the defence of their vessels and flags against the enemy, Arnold being the last man who debarked. The enemy did not venture into the cove, but kept up a distant cannonade, until our vessels were burnt to the water's edge, after

* Believed to be Butter bay, a few miles above Otter creek.

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which Arnold commenced his march for Crown point, about fifteen miles distant, by a bridle way through an unsettled wilderness, crossed the lake at that place, and proceeded to Ticonderoga, where he had been preceded by Colonel Wigglesworth in the Trumbull, with two schooners, the sloop, and one gondola, being all of our squadron which escaped.

When the action commenced on the 11th, Arnold's galley mustered seventy-three hands including himself, of whom twenty-seven were killed or wounded, and of the last, three only survived, and these with the loss of limbs.

I am indebted for these details to my valued friend and companion in arms, the late Brigadier-general Cushing, who served as a sergeant of marines on board Arnold's galley, under his brother Captain Nathaniel Cushing of the Massachusetts line, who died on his farm at Bellpré, in 1814; to General Arnold's official letters, and to the British Annual Register. Thus terminated General Arnold's naval adventure, which like his march across the wilderness, eventuated in heavy expenses, and the loss of many valuable lives, without a solitary ray of solid advantage to the public service.

Reflections on General Arnold's conduct.

I have found it impossible to account for the position General Arnold took behind Valcour island, unless with intention to escape the enemy's observation, and then at every hazard to fall on his rear, and destroy his batteaux; but this suggestion is silenced by the circumstance of his going out to meet the adverse squadron. If he had kept the open lake, he could by a chain of signal boats have been advised of the enemy's movements and force, so soon as they came out of Sorel river, and then if he had been in sufficient force, he might have beaten them back, or if too weak, he could have made good his retreat to Ticonderoga, at his discretion; instead of which he abandoned the main waters of the lake, cooped himself up between an island and the main, gave the enemy a free passage, and by his voluntary position cut himself off from succour and retreat. Yet, notwith-

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standing this excess of rashness and folly, in which victory was impossible, and no end could be produced by defeat, but to exalt his character for animal courage, on the blood of men equally brave, which he was bound to spare, by the strongest obligations of duty and humanity; the zeal and industry of his partisans and the erroneous policy of the government, procured for him all the credit which could have been attached to a splendid victory;—his conduct was applauded and his bravery extolled, and the flagrant evidences of his indiscretion, and incompetency to command, were converted into additional claims on the public confidence.

It must be admitted, that on defensive principles, General Arnold's order of battle was judicious, because it secured his flanks, condensed his force, and concentrated his fire; but as he neither defended a pass, nor covered a position, nor was able to cope with the enemy, the disposition he made was absurd and desperate. It may be worthy remark, that this battle was fought within seven miles of the memorable scene of Commodore Macdonough's triumph, and that the same *principle* of formation prevailed in both instances, though the results were so widely different.

General Carleton arrives at Crown point.

Having demolished our flotilla, Sir Guy Carleton landed at Crown point, where he awaited the arrival of his army, the rear of which got up a few days after, being retarded by adverse winds, which commenced on the 14th, and continued to blow from the southward for a week. The delays incident to such weather, and the lateness of the season in that inhospitable clime, discouraged Sir Guy's designs against Ticonderoga, and he signified his indecision to the minister* the day on which he advanced with a heavy covering party, to reconnoitre our works, which he found numerous, strong, and fully

Reconnoitres our works at Ticonderoga,

* Sir Guy Carleton to Lord George Germain:—

"*Maria, off Crown point, Oct. 24th*, 1776.

"The season is so far advanced that I cannot yet pretend to inform your lordship, whether any thing further can be done this season."

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manned. He knew that it was too late to open trenches before the place, and that to attempt it by assault, in our state of preparation, would be to hazard a repulse, or, in the most favourable result, to expose his army to dismemberment. To take the place and not to hold it, would be to gain no solid advantage, and he well understood the difficulty and expense, if not impossibility, of keeping open the communication with Canada, and subsisting an army at such a distance from its resources; he therefore, with the circumspection of an able and experienced commander, declined the unfruitful perils before him, and determined to cherish his force for the succeeding campaign. With this resolution he commenced his retreat, and led back his army to Canada, where he cantoned his troops, and thus closed the campaign of 1776 in the northern department.

and retires to winter quarters, Oct. 6.

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CHAPTER III.

CHAP. III.

Comparative view of the operations of Sir Jeffery Amherst on Lake Champlain, in 1758, and of Sir Guy Carleton, in 1776.—General Gates, after the return of Sir Guy Carleton to Canada, is ordered to reinforce General Washington.—Measures adopted.—Despatches Major Wilkinson from Minissink for orders.—Wilkinson's rencontre with Colonel George Gibson, and Joseph Nourse, esq.—His interview with Major-general Lee.—Conversation with that officer.—Reflections which sprung out of it.—General Lee surprised and taken prisoner by Colonel Harcourt.—Reflections on the event.—General Lee's letter to General Gates.—His conduct and motives compared.—Wilkinson rejoins General Gates.—The effect of Lee's misfortune on him.—Troops march for Bethlehem.—Symptoms of caution in a military chief.—Reach Bethlehem, and fall in with General Sullivan.—Letter from General Washington to General Gates.—Arrive at head quarters.—Causes of the misfortunes of the grand army.—The spirit of the country invincible.—General Washington's situation and the condition of his troops.—Conduct of the new levies.—Extracts from General Washington's correspondence with the President of Congress.—Contrast of the British and American armies.—Measures to oppose the enemy's passage of the Delaware.—General Howe's conduct, and General Washington's retreat through the Jerseys, examined.—A brief analysis of Sir William Howe's operations after crossing the Hudson.—Proclamation of the British commissioners and its effects.—The praiseworthy resolution of the Congress and commander in chief.—Deplorable situation of General Washington.—His appearance.—Further extracts from his correspondence.—Colonel Joseph Reed's letter to General Washington.—General Washington's letter to Colonels Read and Cadwalader.—Wilkinson

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joins the brigade of St. Clair, and accompanies General Gates to Philadelphia.—Opinions of General Gates.—Gloomy appearance of Philadelphia.—Wilkinson returns and joins his brigade at M'Conky's ferry.—Delivers a letter from General Gates to General Washington.—Enterprize against Trenton.—Conduct of Captain Thomas Forrest, Captain William Washington, and Lieutenant James Monroe.—Colonel Stark's conduct.—Successful issue of the enterprize.—Colonel Rahl, the Hessian commander, wounded and made prisoner.—His death.—Simultaneous attacks proposed; they fail.—Reflections on the conduct of General Washington, and of the enemy.—General Washington re-crosses the Delaware.—Acquaintance with Lieutenant Monroe.—Effects of the enterprize against Trenton.—Operations in the Jerseys resumed.—General Washington's position at Trenton.—The British army under Lord Cornwallis advances, Jan. 2d, 1777.—General Washington turns his left flank under the cover of the night.—Battle of Princeton.—Death of General Mercer.—The British army panic struck, retreat to Brunswick, and take up permanent quarters.—General Washington, by easy marches, reaches Morristown, where he takes post.—Merits of the Philadelphia first troop of dragoons.

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Comparative view of General Amherst's operations in 1758, and Sir Guy Carleton's in 1776.

THE determination of Sir Guy Carleton to return with his army to Canada in the month of October, without striking a blow, when he had approached within fifteen miles of us, and after every preparation necessary to an attack had been made, resembled very much the conduct of Sir Jeffery Amherst, when moving in an opposite direction. That officer, in the campaign of 1758, after advancing as far as Cumberland head, completely equipped for the attack of Montreal, then in possession of the French, in consequence of the lateness of the season, abandoned the expedition on the 20th of October, returned to Crown point, and led his troops into winter quarters. Those chiefs were equally distinguished for their private virtues and professional knowledge; therefore

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they were not to be seduced by the allurements of momentary vanity or ambition, to overstep the sacred obligations of humanity and of duty to their fellow creatures, their country and their God, by which every military commander is bound, to foster the lives of men confided to his disposal. Yet those officers were not arraigned for tardy movements, nor did they incur the censures of the government to which they were responsible, notwithstanding the severity with which the conduct of unfortunate generals is scrutinized by the popular branch of that government.

Compare this beneficent and provident conduct with that of some of our military officers, and we shall suffer by the contrast. In the army of the United States, the economy of human life, which should constitute a primary object, is the last thing considered. The ignorance, improvidence, and presumption of the war department during the late war, involved a wild dissipation of the public treasure, without effecting a salutary or seasonable provision. The introduction of anomalous authorities, and the interference of the secretaries of war are found to distract every operation, and subvert order and responsibility. The systematical espionage which was worthy the cold, vindictive spirit of a Madison, operating as a bounty to dishonour, has infected the corps of the army with jealousy, and men of honour who adhere to the sword from love of the profession, are alternately disgusted and disheartened by the succession of follies and innovations.

So soon as it was ascertained that General Carleton had abandoned Crown point, General Gates despatched Colonel Wigglesworth with a flag of truce to the Isle aux Noix, and he returned with satisfactory evidence that the enemy had gone into winter quarters. In consequence of this information, General Gates dismissed the militia,*

* Consisting of Wingate's and Lyman's regiments from New Hampshire, Swift's and Motte's from Connecticut, and Brewer's, Willard's, John Read's, Wigglesworth's, Wheelock's and Woodbridge's from Massachusetts, under General Bricket.

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girl had awoke; but his wanton levity was in a moment changed into painful apprehensions. Awaking out of a sound sleep in the dead of night, the unexpected and menacing appearance of an officer, with a Canadian capôt, a scarlet under coat, and a gold laced hat, with a pistol in each hand, was sufficient to dissipate all sense of an amorous nature, and to excite those frigid sensations, which cannot be realised so sensibly as when an unarmed man believes himself in the power of an enemy. For a moment the gentlemen were struck dumb with alarm; literally naked and defenceless, and believing me to be a British officer, their situation appeared hopeless, and it was several seconds before they demanded, "*Who are you?*" The question was returned and repeated several times in the same breath, until reflecting on the circumstance of my appearance with arms, I announced myself to that interesting companion and meritorious officer, Colonel George Gibson, who served through the revolutionary war, and gave his life to his country on the 4th of November, 1791, and to Joseph Nourse, esq. the present register of the treasury. Relieved by the discovery, Colonel Gibson seized my hand and exclaimed, "Colonel Wilkinson, so help me God! I never was so happy to make an acquaintance. By G—d! you have almost scared me out of a year's growth." These gentlemen had parted with General Lee the evening before, and were absent on furlough, and Mr. Nourse being General Lee's private secretary, they could of course direct me with precision where to find him. Taking leave of them I pursued my journey, and about 4 o'clock in the morning reached his quarters, at White's tavern, on Basking ridge.

His interview with General Lee.

I was presented to the General as he lay in bed, and delivered into his hands the letter of General Gates. He examined the superscription, and observed it was addressed to General Washington, and declined opening it, until I apprised him of the contents and the motives of my visit; he then broke the seal and read it, after which

he desired me to take repose. I lay down on my blanket before a comfortable fire, amidst the officers of his suite; for we were not in those days incumbered with beds or baggage. I arose at the dawn, but could not see the General, with whom I had been previously acquainted, before eight o'clock. After some inquiries respecting the conduct of the campaign on the northern frontier, he gave me a brief account of the operations of the grand army, which he condemned in strong terms. He observed, "that our siege of Boston had led us into great errors; that the attempt to defend islands against a superior land and naval force was madness; that Sir William Howe could have given us *check-mate* at his discretion; and that we owed our salvation to his indolence, or disinclination to terminate the war.—When I reached the army on York island," said Lee, "all hands were busily employed in collecting materials and erecting barracks; and I found little Mifflin exulting in the prospect of fine winter quarters at Kingsbridge. I replied to him, *Winter quarters here, Sir!* and the British army still in the field! Go, set fire to those you have built, and get away by the light, or Sir William Howe will find quarters for you."

His conversation with that officer.

This advice of Lee was generally understood; it obtained for him merited applause, and General Washington gave him due credit for it. He had also been opposed to the occupancy of Fort Washington,* and the fall of that place enhanced his military reputation, while unavoidable misfortunes, and the unfortunate issue of the campaign, originating in causes beyond the controul of the commander in chief, had quickened the discontents generated at Cambridge, and raised a party against him in Congress; and it was confidently asserted at the time,

* I afterwards conversed with General Greene, respecting this affair, who was chiefly blamed for attempting to hold the place, and I recollect well he observed, "I would to God, we had had 10,000 men there." He was of opinion the ground was tenable, and that it was lost by the insufficiency of our force; I am inclined to the same opinion, and the fact may now be ascertained.

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but is not worthy of credit, that a motion had been made in that body, tending to supercede him in the command of the army. In this temper of the times, if General Lee had anticipated General Washington, in cutting the cordon of the enemy between New York and the Delaware, the commander in chief would probably have been superceded, and the man who lived the darling of his country, and died the admiration of the world, might have been consigned to retirement or oblivion. In this case Lee would have succeeded him, whose manifold infirmities would have been obscured by that honest but blind enthusiasm of the public, which never stoops to compare causes and effects, much less to analyse motives and measures. This officer's genius, education, military observation, and peculiar talents for war, qualified him to fill with eclat, the most distinguished subordinate stations in command; but his disposition and habits were adverse to the preservation of public confidence, or the conciliation of personal feuds and discords; he would therefore soon have been displaced; successor upon successor would have followed him, and the calamities of the country would have kept pace with its impatience and caprice; yet, although the avowal may be more honest than discreet, I owe it to truth to declare, that after the declaration of independence, I could never subscribe to the sentiment, that the cause of the country, depended on the life or services of any individual: I always considered it impolitic to place our dependence on an ordinary casualty, and I rejected the humiliating idea, because it concentred in one man, the credit which belonged to the whole nation; not that the command could have been placed in safer or better hands than those of the immortalized Washington, but because other men would have been found, and General Greene in particular, to supply his place with effect, and more especially, because the severance of the British empire had been written in the book of fate, and the destiny of the North American colonies was protected by Him who governs the universe.

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General Lee captured by Colonel Harcourt.

General Lee wasted the morning in altercation with certain militia corps who were of his command, particularly the Connecticut light horse,* several of whom appeared in large full-bottomed perukes, and were treated very irreverently; the call of the adjutant general for orders, also occupied some of his time, and we did not sit down to breakfast before 10 o'clock. General Lee was engaged in answering General Gates's letter, and I had risen from the table, and was looking out of an end window, down a lane about one hundred yards in length, which led to the house from the main road, when I discovered a party of British dragoons turn a corner of the avenue at a full charge. Startled at this unexpected spectacle, I exclaimed, "Here, Sir, are the British cavalry." "*Where?*" replied the General, who had signed his letter in the instant. "Around the house;" for they had opened files, and encompassed the building. General Lee appeared alarmed, yet collected, and his second observation marked his self-possession: "Where is the guard?—damn the guard, why don't they fire?" and after a momentary pause, he turned to me and said, "Do, Sir, see what has become of the guard." The women of the house at this moment entered the room, and proposed to him to conceal himself in a bed, which he rejected with evident disgust. I caught up my pistols which lay on the table, thrust the letter he had been writing into my pocket, and passed into a room at the opposite end of the house, where I had seen the guard in the morning. Here I discovered their arms; but the men were absent. I stepped out of the door, and perceived the dragoons chasing them in different directions, and receiving a very uncivil salutation, I returned into the house.

Too inexperienced immediately to penetrate the motives of this enterprize, I considered the *rencontre* acci-

* One wanted forage, another his horse shod, another his pay, a fourth provisions, &c.—to which the General replied, "Your wants are numerous; but you have not mentioned the last—you want to go home, and shall be indulged, for damn you, you do no good here."

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dental, and from the terrific tales spread over the country, of the violence and barbarity of the enemy, I believed it to be a wanton murdering party, and determined not to die without company. I accordingly sought a position where I could not be approached by more than one person at a time, and with a pistol in each hand I awaited the expected search, resolved to shoot the first and the second person who might appear, and then to appeal to my sword. I did not remain long in this unpleasant situation, but was apprised of the object of the incursion by the very audible declaration, "*If the General does not surrender in five minutes, I will set fire to the house;*" which after a short pause was repeated with a solemn oath; and within two minutes I heard it proclaimed, "*Here is the General, he has surrendered.*" A general shout ensued, the trumpet sounded the assembly, and the unfortunate Lee mounted on my horse, which stood ready at the door, was hurried off in triumph, bareheaded, in his slippers and blanket coat, his collar open, and his shirt very much soiled from several days use.

Reflections on the event.

What a lesson of caution is to be derived from this event, and how important the admonition furnished by it. What an evidence of the caprice of fortune, of the fallibility of ambitious projects, and the inscrutable ways of Heaven. The capture of General Lee was felt as a public calamity; it cast a gloom over the country, and excited general sorrow. This sympathy was honourable to the people, and due to the stranger who had embarked his fortune with theirs, and determined to share their fate, under circumstances of more than common peril. Although this misfortune deprived the country of its most experienced chief, I have ever considered the deprivation a public blessing, ministered by the hand of Providence; for if General Lee had not abandoned caution for convenience, and taken quarters two miles from his army, on his exposed flank, he would have been safe; if a domestic traitor who passed his quarters the same morning on private business, had not casually fallen in with Colonel Harcourt, on a reconnoitring party, the

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general's quarters would not have been discovered; if my visit, and the controversy with the Connecticut light horse, had not spun out the morning unseasonably, the General would have been at his camp; if Colonel Harcourt had arrived an hour sooner, he would have found the guard under arms, and would have been repulsed, or resisted until succour could have arrived; if he had arrived half an hour later, the General would have been with his corps; if the guard had paid ordinary attention to their duty and had not abandoned their arms,* the General's quarters would have been defended; or if he had obeyed the peremptory and reiterated orders of General Washington, he would have been beyond the reach of the enemy.—And shall we impute to blind chance, such a chain of rare incidents? I conscientiously reply in the negative; because the combination was too intricate and perplexed for accidental causes, or the agency of man: it must have been designed.

General Lee merited severe punishment for his neglect of duty and disobedience of orders, and he received it from an unexpected hand. His offence was well understood by the army, and his misfortune was unpitied by those who reflected on the cause of it. It is a fact, he had very strong reasons for his neglect of General Washington's reiterated commands; but although they were not such as to justify the violation of a fundamental military principle, yet I verily believe his motives were patriotic, though intimately connected with a sinister ambition; for I am persuaded that in the moment of his capture, he meditated a stroke against the enemy, which, in its consequences, would have depressed General Washington, elevated himself, and *immediately* served the cause of the United States. This opinion is supported by the following letter to General Gates.

* The morning being cold and the sun bright, they had left their station, crossed the main road, and were sunning themselves on the south side of a house about 200 yards from the tavern, which enabled Harcourt to cut them off from their arms.

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General Lee's letter to General Gates.

"*Basking Ridge, Dec. 13th*, 1776.

"My dear Gates,

"The ingenious manœuvre of Fort Washington has unhinged the goodly fabric we had been building. There never was so damned a stroke. *Entre nous*, a certain great man is most damnably deficient. He has thrown me into a situation, where I have my choice of difficulties; if I stay in this province, I risk myself and army; and if I do not stay, the province is lost for ever. I have neither guides, cavalry, medicines, money, shoes or stockings. I must act with the greatest circumspection. Tories are in my front, rear, and on my flanks; the mass of the people is strangely contaminated; in short, unless something, which I do not expect, turns up we are lost; our counsels have been weak to the last degree. As to what relates to yourself, if you think you can be in time to aid the General, I would have you by all means go; you will at least save your army. It is said that the whigs are determined to set fire to Philadelphia; if they strike this decisive stroke, the day will be our own; but unless it is done, all chance of liberty in any part of the globe is for ever vanished. Adieu my dear friend! God bless you!

"CHARLES LEE."

His conduct and motives considered and compared.

Education and experience instructed General Lee that Sir William Howe, by pushing his front towards Philadelphia, must weaken his communication with his magazines at Brunswick, and expose his cordon of posts to be cut: and he knew that the dissolution of a link in the chain would compel Sir William Howe to fall back and abandon a great portion of the conquests of the campaign; he knew also, that the shew of military force in the Jerseys was necessary to hold the enemy in check, and keep alive the spirit of resistance in that state; and that to hang on the flanks and rear of a victorious army, is the most effectual plan to impede its progress. Under these impressions, it would seem that General Lee had made

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the determination to violate his orders, to trust to his fortune, and to hazard his fame on the issue of some bold enterprize; for we find him whiling away his time between the Hudson and the Delaware, by indolent marches and unnecessary halts, keeping always the route to General Washington's head quarters, but at the same time, watching the movements of Sir William Howe, and waiting the period of his going into winter quarters. I have strong cause for belief, that the decisive moment had arrived, and that if Lee had not been made prisoner, he would have attacked the British post at Princeton the next morning, where the superiority of his force would have insured him success.

The author of these memoirs is aware that at this distance of time, the novelty of this exposition may excite surprise, and that to give it effect, it must be supported by facts and circumstance, at once strong and clear. He is sensible of the difficulty to convince men against their wills, and of the general propensity to cavil; but being himself unbiassed by any motives other than the developement of truth, and having never doubted the soundness of his deductions, he will lay open the sources from whence they have been derived, to the consideration of the intelligent and the candid by whom alone he will submit to be judged.

General Lee had halted his division several days at Morristown, and marched thence, on the twelfth December, to Veal town, barely eight miles, a conclusive proof in itself, was other testimony wanting, of his determination not to cross the Delaware; but when Colonel Scammel, the adjutant general, called on him from General Sullivan, who was encamped with the troops, for orders of march on the morning of his capture, after musing a minute or two, he asked the Colonel if he had with him the manuscript map of the country, which was produced and spread on a table; it attracted my attention, and I observed General Lee trace with his finger, the route from Veal town to Pluckamin, thence to Somerset court-house, and on by Rocky hill to Princeton;

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he then returned to Pluckamin, and traced the route in the same manner, by Bound brook to Brunswick, and after a close inspection carelessly said to Scammel, "Tell General Sullivan to move down towards Pluckamin, that I will soon be with him." This was off his route to Alexandria on the Delaware, where he had been ordered to cross, and directly on that towards Brunswick and Princeton. The better to illustrate this last route, I beg leave to quote the following distances, viz. from Veal town to Pluckamin 6 miles, from Pluckamin to Somerset court-house 8 miles, from this place to Rocky hill 11 miles, and thence to Princeton $2\frac{1}{2}$, in the whole $27\frac{1}{2}$, or at most 28 miles, a distance perfectly in his reach with fresh troops by the next morning. Combine these circumstances with his letter to General Gates, which I bore off unfolded, and we have a strong manifestation of his views and designs: the extraordinary tenor of that letter made impressions not to be effaced, and I have often wondered why it has been so long withheld from the world; for although it would have convicted General Lee of discontent, insubordination and disrespect to General Washington, it would have saved his character from the suspicion of defection to the cause he had espoused. The motive for the suppression will now be discerned, and justice will be rendered to the memory of an unfortunate man, who, however irregular his personal ambition, served this country with fidelity and effect.

But whether moved by personal ambition, by hostility to his chief, or by a spirit of patriotism, or whether governed by the combination of these motives, General Lee had reduced himself to the dilemma, of abiding the sentence of a general court martial, for disobedience of peremptory orders, or of exciting by some "*coup*," at once brilliant and solid, a blaze of popular applause, which might not only justify his offence, but give him the chief command. In such a case no man of pride and resolution could hesitate for the alternative; and it is on these facts and deductions I rest my hypothesis. It is for the world to examine, and weigh, and determine, the merits

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of my conclusions; and whether the award be favourable or otherwise, they can produce no harm to my contemporaries or posterity, but may furnish a useful lesson to military men, WHO, IN ALL SITUATIONS, ARE MOST SAFE WHEN THEY BEST PERFORM THEIR DUTY.

So soon as Lieutenant-colonel Harcourt retreated with his prize, I repaired to the stable, mounted the first horse I could find, and rode full speed to General Sullivan, whom I found under march towards Pluckamin. I had not examined General Lee's letter, but believing a knowledge of the contents might be useful to General Sullivan, who succeeded him in command, I handed it to him, who after the perusal, returned it with his thanks, and advised me to rejoin General Gates without delay, which I did the next morning at Sussex court-house, whither he had led the troops from Van Kempt's.

Wilkinson rejoins General Gates.

Lee's misfortune afflicted Gates profoundly: they had been long acquainted, had served together in the British army, and were personally attached; their politics and political connexions were in unison, and their sympathies and antipathies ran in the same current; yet long after and in misfortune they became estranged.*

Troops march for Bethlehem.

The troops were soon put in motion, Brigadier-general Arnold leading the column by the direct road to Easton; General Gates with his suite and a light guard, proceeded on a devious route, and by a rapid march, reached the Delaware, some distance above Easton, at one Levy's, about eight o'clock, where we halted for the night, the General observing that the Jews were whigs, but in consequence of certain inquiries made by Levy, which the General considered a little mysterious, he de-

* General Lee, in answer to his old aid-de-camp, Edwards, on this subject, observed, "The lady who is a closer calculator than her husband, believed it would be more profitable to worship the rising sun, than stick to a fallen friend; she therefore determined to pay her court by turning me out of doors. I do not blame Gates, because he has fallen under a most damnable *gynæcocracy*, and cannot help himself." I read the letter, and quote from memory.

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sired the party to conceal his name, and rank, as he did that of Colonel John Trumbull,* the deputy adjutant-general. The General called himself Captain Smith, of Berkley, Virginia; and on Levy's observing, he thought he had seen the Colonel in Connecticut, the General answered "No! he is a neighbour's son in Berkley;" but this observation so sensibly alarmed him, that, although the night was very inclement, he ordered the horses to be saddled, and we made a perilous passage of the river, through floating ice, and marched until midnight, before we lay down, in a dirty stove room which almost suffocated me. The next morning we breakfasted at Nazareth, and reached Bethlehem in the afternoon, where we found General Arnold and our own corps, and also that of General Sullivan, who had changed his route the moment he found himself in command, and pressed forward to join the commander in chief.

Dec. 15. Reach Bethlehem, and fall in with General Sullivan.

The following letter from General Washington to General Gates, received at Bethlehem, will expose his forlorn condition, his apprehensions, *his reliance on Heaven*, his unimpaired fortitude, and the grounds of his hopes.

"*Head Quarters, Dec. 14th*, 1776.

Letter from General Washington to General Gates.

"Dear Sir,

"Before this comes to hand, you will have heard of the melancholy situation of our affairs. I do not mean at this time to detail our misfortunes.—With a handful of men compared to the enemy's force, we have pushed through the Jerseys, without being able to make the smallest opposition, and to pass the Delaware. General Howe is now on the other side, and beyond all question means, if possible, to possess himself of Philadelphia; his troops are extended from Penny town to Burlington, and the main body, from the best advices at the former, are within the neighbourhood of Trenton. I wish it were in my power to tell you that appearances were against his

* A meritorious officer, son of the sage and patriot, Governor Trumbull, and since one of the distinguished artists of our country.

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success; at present I confess they are not. But few of the militia of this state have yet come out, except those belonging to the city, nor have I any great hope of their assistance, unless we can collect a respectable force; in such case, perhaps, they may turn out and afford their aid. I have heard you are coming on with seven regiments; this may have a happy effect; and let me intreat you not to delay a moment in hastening to Pitts town. You will advise me of your approaches, and of the time you expect to be there, that I may meet you with an express, and inform you of your destination, and such further movements as may be necessary. I expect General Lee will be there this evening or to-morrow, who will be followed by General Heath and his division. If we can draw our forces together, I trust under the *smiles of Providence*, we may yet effect an important stroke, or at least prevent General Howe from executing his plan. Philadelphia is now the object of our immediate care; you know the importance of it, and the fatal consequences that must attend its loss. I am persuaded no aid with you to give, will be delayed a single instant. Your arrival may prove a most happy circumstance.

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"The Congress have adjourned to Baltimore, but previously resolved that Philadelphia should be defended to the last extremity. Lord Sterling is going to meet General Lee, and concert with him a plan of operations. I wish you to be there, and would advise you not to wait the slow march of your troops. I have wrote to General Arnold, to go to the eastward, on account of the intelligence from that quarter; his presence there will be of infinite service.

"I am, dear Sir,
"With great esteem,
"Your most obed't serv't,
"GO: WASHINGTON.

"*Major-general Gates.*"

The troops marched the next morning; the general officers followed in a day or two, and joined General

Dec. 16.

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CHAP. III

Washington in the neighbourhood of Coryell's ferry. The affairs of the United States were reduced at that awful period to the lowest ebb, and, although foreign to the design of these memoirs, a summary view of our situation on the western bank of the Delaware, and the circumstances which led to it, may not be unacceptable to the reader.

Dec. 20.

The irregular composition of the army of General Washington in the campaign of 1776, the inexperience of his officers and men in the essentials of military service, the defect of knowledge for the conduct of the several great departments, on which military operations chiefly depend, the total destitution of discipline, subordination, and police, the quality and condition of his arms, and the great defect of the munitions of war, baffled solid calculations, and forbade his reliance on the execution of specific enterprizes. Yet, notwithstanding the campaign opened with the unfortunate combat of Long island; notwithstanding the inauspicious events which ensued that battle, until our army arrived at White plains; the stand made in the vicinity of that place; General Howe's refusal of a general action,* which was offered him on that ground, and his retreat to York island, had retrieved character, renovated confidence, and in a great measure wiped off the effects of precedent disasters, at a period of the season, when, in former wars, it had been customary for the combatants to seek winter quarters. But our difficulties were about to commence, and may be traced, distinctly and unequivocally, to the insufficiency of our continental force, and the short term of our inlistments. These were the main sources of those losses and misfortunes, which pursued General Wash-

Nov. 5.

* See Major-general Heath's Memoirs, p. 81—83. This officer commanded a division on the left of General Washington's line, and did not change his position. See also Ramsay, vol. i. p. 395. See likewise the letters of Colonel R. H. Harrison, secretary of General Washington, written to Congress by his order from the 25th of October to the 3d November inclusive, and the General's letter of the 6th November, after Sir William Howe fell back on Kingsbridge.

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ington in the campaign of 1776; and but for his firmness, the perseverance of the Congress, the resolution of a handful of brave men who kept the field, and the supineness of the British commander, in not pressing his advantages, the horrible scenes of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, during the reign of the barbarian bigot Philip II. might have been acted over again in the United States of America. The spirit of the middle states might have been appalled, as was the actual case of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, but the indiscriminate rapine and violence of the enemy would have re-animated and roused the people to vengeance. The southern states, rent by civil feuds, bleeding by the hands of brothers,* and overrun by the enemy, still cherished the flame of liberty, which when silence and darkness proclaimed its extinction, burst from its embers with volcanic fury, and spread its fire in every direction. The eastern states had been tested and found invincible: numbers, habits, hardihood, the enthusiasm of religion and of liberty, a condensed population, and the strength of their country established their security, and will make them formidable, so long as their civil polity and equality of condition are maintained.

State of the American army.

The loss of Forts Washington and Lee would not have been felt, nor would Sir William Howe have penetrated the Jerseys, if General Washington had commanded an army of twenty, or even ten thousand men, well found and engaged for the war; but instead of a permanent force, his troops, for they deserved not the name of an army, were composed of levies for twelve months, and militia engaged some for six months, and others for a shorter period, who, to use the language of General

* Governor Shelby in 1791 refused to serve as second on the expedition under General Scott against Ouiocanan, assigning for reason, that at the affair of King's mountain he fought the battle, and General Campbell ran away with the honour. In this action I think he represented to me, *that two brothers, expert riflemen, were seen to present at each other, to fire and fall at the same instant.* Their names were given to me, but they have escaped my memory.

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CHAP. III.

Washington, in his letter to the President of Congress, Dec. 20th, 1776, "*come in you cannot tell how, go you cannot tell when, and act you cannot tell where; consume your provisions, exhaust your stores, and leave you at last at a critical moment.*" The eastern militia deserted in crowds from the White plains, and were all soon after disbanded by the expiration of their engagements, and the troops which General Washington had assembled west of the North river near Fort Lee, to watch General Howe's motions after his retrograde march from the White plains, consisted chiefly of levies from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the Jerseys, the former engaged to the first of January, the two last to the first of December. The term of these men's service was about to expire, and they were generally afflicted by the prevalent diseases of camps. Under these circumstances the loss of Fort Washington, the sudden irruption of the enemy into the Jerseys, and the capture of Fort Lee with a considerable quantity of baggage, stores and provisions, discouraged and disheartened them so much, that their impatience to return home predominated over all other considerations. At Brunswick, they almost to a man left General Washington, when the enemy were actually in sight, and to excuse their defection at such a critical moment, they spread every where exaggerated accounts of the enemy's force and energy, and our own truly deplorable condition, which paralysed the great mass of the community, and defeated the exertions of the zealous; whilst the continental corps melted away by disease and desertion, like snow before the sun, and, indeed, nought but the General's unshaken resolution, and the firm support of the officers who adhered to him, could have prevented a total dissolution of what was called the *Grand Army*, now reduced to 3000 men.

Conduct of the levies.

Under these circumstances, in his affecting letter to the President of Congress, of the 20th of December, the General employs strong language to awaken their apprehensions, and rouse all their energies; he expresses his decided opinion, that it was General Howe's inten-

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tion to possess himself of Philadelphia in the course of the winter, and adds "*in truth I do not see what is to prevent him, as ten days more will put an end to the existence of our army;*" and speaking of the lethargy and backwardness of the people to turn out in defence of the country, he observes, "When danger is at a distance, they will not turn out at all; when it comes home to them, instead of flying to arms, the well-affected are employed in securing their families and effects, whilst the disaffected are concerting measures to make their submission, and spread terror and dismay all around, to induce others to follow the example;" and on the same subject he observes, "*Instance New Jersey! witness Pennsylvania!—Could any thing but the river Delaware save Philadelphia?*" Having determined to take certain measures to increase his force, he submitted them to Congress for their adoption or rejection, and adds, "*It may be thought I am going a good deal out of the line of my duty, to adopt these measures, or to advise thus freely. A character to lose, an estate to forfeit, the inestimable blessing of liberty at stake, and a life devoted, must be my excuse.*"

What a wretched spectacle did our troops present in retreating through the Jerseys! Without cavalry—but partially provided with artillery—deficient in transport for the little we had to carry—without tents, tools, or camp equipage—without magazines of any kind—half-clothed—badly armed—debilitated by disease, disheartened by misfortune, and worn out with fatigues:—Thus crippled and disabled, General Washington could no longer make a shew of offence, but turned all his attention to the prevention of Sir William Howe's passage of the Delaware, the only means remaining in his power for the protection of Philadelphia, which the Congress had resolved "*should be defended to the last extremity.*" He accordingly divided his force into parties of observation, and stationary guards, posted along the west bank of the river at the ferries, fords, and crossing places, from Dunks's ferry below Trenton to Coryell's ferry above, a distance of thirty miles, and at the same time directed

Measures to oppose the enemy's passage of the Delaware.

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the river flotilla to form a chain of guard vessels. These precautions were the most judicious which could have been adopted, to answer the proposed end, yet they would have been of little avail, if General Howe, when marching against a city behind a great river, *had not forgot that his pontoons might be necessary, or neglected to carry them along with his army.*

But although General Washington after the fall of Fort Washington, made the most of his means, yet his destruction would have been inevitable, if Sir William Howe had followed up his advantages, or had not restrained the ardour of his troops.

It is impossible I should censure any man wantonly, much less a military character, and he an enemy. I will therefore test the merits of General Howe's conduct by facts.

General Howe's conduct, and General Washington's retreat through the Jerseys examined.

With an army of sixfold numerical force, and tenfold effective strength, well proportioned in the several arms appropriate to the theatre of the war, composed of disciplined European troops in health and vigour, ably commanded, completely found in all things, and elated with success; Sir William Howe, four days after his capture of Fort Washington, detached Lord Cornwallis to cross the North river between Dobb's ferry and Fort Lee, with his elite,* consisting of two battalions of British and three of Hessian grenadiers, two of light infantry, the guards, the chasseurs, the royal highlanders, the 33d regiment, and a part of the queen's light dragoons, forming a corps on the lowest estimate (for troops in their first campaign who had not suffered severely,) of at least 8,000 men. A landing was accordingly made on the morning of the 20th November,† and soon after ascending the height, the enemy found themselves in the presence of 3,000 militia, who were suffered to escape across the Hackinsack river, without being brought to action, and his lordship took possession of Fort Lee, its artillery and

* Marshall's Life of Washington, vol. ii. p. 476.

† See General Washington's letters, Nov. 19th and 21st.

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stores. That we were surprised, is admitted on all hands, and that the enemy had us in a *cul de sac*, from which he permitted us to escape, is equally true; yet General Washington remained at the village of Hackinsack within four miles of the enemy, the 21st of November, and on the 22d retired to Newark by Aquakenunck bridge. At this place he reposed until the 28th, on which day the approach of the British corps obliged him to *change position*, and as his rear guard left one end of the town the British van entered the other. The distance from Newark to Brunswick, by Woodbridge, the route in those days, was about twenty-four miles, the country champaign, and the road dry; yet with this overwhelming force at his heels, General Washington was allowed to retreat in safety, and to reach Brunswick the next day without molestation. Nov. 29.

After two days halt at Newark, Lord Cornwallis on the 30th November advanced upon Brunswick, and arrived the next evening on the opposite bank of the Raritan, which is fordable at low water. A spirited cannonade ensued across the river, in which our battery was served by Captain Alexander Hamilton,* but the effects on either side, as is usual in contests between field batteries only, were inconsiderable. General Washington made a shew of resistance, but after night fall decamped, and reached Princeton the next morning, where he left Lord Sterling with one German and five Virginia regiments, making in the whole 1,200, as a covering party, and with his main body he prosecuted his march without delay to Trenton, where he arrived in the evening. He lost no time in transporting his scanty stock of baggage and stores to the west bank of the river to Philadelphia, and adopted the necessary precautions to remove the river craft beyond the reach of the enemy. He was reinforced at this place by about 2,000 volunteer militia, chiefly from the city of Philadelphia, with a detachment of Proctor's artillery, and six field pieces under Captain Dec. 1.

* Since Major-general.

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Thomas Forest. The tardy movement of the enemy beguiled him into a suspicion, that they did not intend to advance beyond Brunswick, and accordingly he on the 6th December ordered the militia to reinforce Lord Sterling at Princeton, and followed them in person the next morning. But the British army whose march had been arrested* at Brunswick, by General Howe, was joined by him on the 6th December, and advancing the next morning at 4 o'clock, obliged Lord Sterling to retire from Princeton one hour before they entered it, at 4 o'clock P. M. Here Sir William halted seventeen hours; marched in pursuit of General Washington at nine the next morning, and reached Trenton at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, just as our last boat was crossing the river.†

A brief analysis of General Howe's operations after crossing the Hudson.

It is manifest from these facts, that if General Howe had been disposed to destroy the puny corps under General Washington, (then styled the Grand Army) it was fully in his power, *by a single forced march*, at any period after his troops came up with our rear at Newark, on the 28th of November, until we had crossed the Delaware. But allowing the corps of Lord Cornwallis to have been 8,000, and a garrison of 10,000 men for New York and its dependencies, he had still a disposable force of 9000,‡ which he could have landed at Elizabeth town point, or Amboy, and taken General Washington in rear. The loss of our artillery and remaining baggage and stores, and the dispersion of our troops, would have been the consequence in either case. All obstacles to the possession of Philadelphia would then have been removed, the loss of which at that period, would have involved the country in heavy calamities. But Sir William by unseasonable halts and indolent marches, having permitted our tattered band to escape; when he arrived at the Delaware, not finding boats ready to transport his army

* Gordon, vol. ii. p. 127. Letters to a Nobleman on the Conduct of the War in the Middle Colonies, printed by J. Wilkie, 1779. Lond.

† General Washington's Letters, vol. i. p. 315, 316.

‡ See Major-general Robinson's evidence before the House of Commons.

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across, instead of sending for his pontoons, or building a few flat-bottomed boats, and pursuing his march to Philadelphia, he selected for his advanced posts a body of Germans, who had exercised the most wanton cruelties and shocking outrages on the inhabitants, indiscriminately, regardless of the royal protections they had received, and of consequence were held in universal abhorrence. To such men, under the Colonels Count Donop and Rahl, strangers to our language, our habits and manners, did Sir William Howe commit the most remote, important and critical points of his occupancy; incautiously cantoning them in the open, defenceless villages of Trenton, Bordentown, Burlington, Mount Holly, and the Black Horse; and having made this injudicious disposition to cover his front, he stationed a respectable detachment of British troops at Princeton under General Leslie, fell back with his main body to Brunswick, and contenting himself with the issue of the campaign, retired to the city of New York, to indulge his natural indolence, and enjoy the delusive pleasures of the long room and the faro table, until the frosts of the season should bridge the Delaware for his passage to Philadelphia. The strong analogy between this conduct and that at Boston, bespeaks some natural defect, which must be Sir William's best apology.

Proclamation of the British commissioners.

About the period of this irruption of the enemy into the Jerseys, the commissioners, Lord and Sir William Howe, issued a proclamation of pardon to all offenders, civil and military, from the private in the ranks to the chief in command, from the committee man to the member of Congress, who within sixty days should make submission and take the oath of allegiance to the British sovereign; after which, it would appear, Sir William occupied himself more in receiving the acknowledgments of repenting sinners than pushing his military operations.

In the Jerseys a general defection took place and in Pennsylvania it was considerable, not in numbers, but for the rank and fortune of the delinquents. Indeed the

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splendid appearance and triumphant march of the British battalions in pursuit of our half-naked, sickly, shattered force, overspread the country with terror, and patriots and sages agonized under the apprehension, that the moment was at hand, when the Congress would be compelled to rescind their pretensions and pass under the yoke. But it was then remarked, and is an instructive fact, well worthy the consideration of every republican citizen, that this dereliction of the public cause was, in general, confined to the most opulent and the most needy classes of society, to those who had nothing to defend and those who had much to lose; the middling class shewed more constancy, more principle, and more resolution. It follows then, that the safety, the happiness, the constitution of the country depends on mediocrity, and that extreme poverty and inordinate riches are alike unfavourable to free governments.

Praiseworthy resolution of the Congress, and commander in chief.

Born with iron nerves, and an unbending dignity of port, which distinguished all his actions, and struck the most presumptuous with awe, General Washington amidst those scenes which "*tried men's souls*," serene, tranquil, and self-possessed, excited the admiration of his followers, and exhibited the heroic example of a chief determined to brave danger and dare death in support of a just cause, and the defence of the most precious rights and interests of mankind; whilst the invincible firmness of Congress, (though torn by division on the great question of independence) exhibited to the world the rare example of a popular assembly, united in principle, inflexible in purpose, and regardless of consequences. Not to one man then, but to such a Congress and such a chief, supported by the handful of brave men who adhered to the cause of their country, are these United States indebted for the cheap purchase of their liberty; and I shall be acquitted of vanity when I acknowledge the sweet solace I derive from the consciousness, that I was one of the little band who faced the storm, when the summer soldier and the sunshine patriot hid their heads. In robbing me of my commission, Pre-

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sident Madison could not despoil me of this source of consolation, nor was the sacrifice necessary to promote the interested intrigues of a successor.

When the divisions of Sullivan and Gates joined General Washington, he found his numbers increased, yet his difficulties were not sensibly diminished, nor were his prospects brightened: ten days would disband his corps, and leave him about fourteen hundred men, miserably provided in all things. I saw him in that gloomy period, dined with him, and attentively marked his aspect; always grave and thoughtful, he appeared at that time pensive and solemn in the extreme; but the state of his mind may be best ascertained by the following extracts from his correspondence. On the 24th of December he thus addresses the President of Congress: "*That I should dwell on the subject of our distresses, cannot be more disagreeable to Congress, than it is painful to myself. The alarming situation to which our affairs are reduced, impels me to the measure. Inquiry and investigation, which in most cases serve to develope and point out a remedy, in ours present more and greater difficulties. Had I entertained a doubt of General Howe's intentions to pass the Delaware on the dissolution of our army and as soon as the ice is made, it would now be done away. An intercepted letter from a gentleman of Philadelphia (who has joined the enemy) to his friend and partner in the city, declares that to be their design; that the army would be there in ten or twenty days from the 16th instant, the day of his writing, if the ice should be made; advises him by no means to move their stores, that they would be safe.*"—And in a letter to Robert Morris, a man to whom his country owed as much in the fiscal department, as it did to General Washington in his military capacity, bearing date the 25th December, he thus expresses himself: "*Bad as our prospects are, I should not have the least doubt of success in the end, did not the late treachery and defection of those who stood foremost in the opposition, while fortune smiled upon us, make me fearful that many more would follow their example; who by using their influence with some, and work-*

Extracts from Washington's correspondence.

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ing upon the fears of others, may extend the circle so as to take in whole towns, counties, nay provinces. Of this we have a recent instance in Jersey; and I wish many parts of Pennsylvania may not be ready to receive the yoke."

During these scenes of adversity, the firm adherence, active exertions and popular influence of General Mifflin, Colonel Joseph Reed, and Colonel John Cadwalader of Pennsylvania, and General Dickenson of the Jerseys, contributed essentially to support the cause of the revolution. In this crisis of our affairs Colonel Reed, who, with Colonel Cadwalader and a body of Pennsylvania militia, was stationed at Bristol, addressed the commander in chief on the subject of an offensive blow, and expressed himself in the following pathetic terms: "*If we could possess ourselves of New Jersey, or any considerable part thereof, the effect would be greater than if we had not left it. Allow me to hope you will consult your own good judgment and spirit, and let not the goodness of your heart subject you to the influence of the opinions of men, in every respect your inferiors, something must be done before the sixty days expire which the commissioners have allowed; for, however many affect to despise it, it is evident very serious attention is paid to it, and I am confident that unless some more favourable appearance attends our arms and cause before that time, a very great number of militia officers will follow the example of Jersey, and take benefit from it. Our cause is desperate and hopeless, if we do not strike some stroke; our affairs are hastening apace to ruin, if we do not retrieve them by some happy event. Delay with us is nearly equal to a total defeat. We must not suffer ourselves to be lulled into security and inactivity, because the enemy does not cross the river. The love of my country, a wife and four children, the respect and attachment I have to you, the ruin and poverty which must attend me and thousands of others, will plead my excuse for so much freedom.*"* Whatever might have been the effect of this letter on the mind of General Washington, it is a conclu-

Colonel Joseph Reed's letter to General Washington.

* Gordon.

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sive testimony of the judgment, zeal and patriotism of Colonel Reed, afterwards governor of Pennsylvania; and the following letter of General Washington to that officer and Colonel Cadwalader, evinces a perfect accord in opinion with Colonel Reed, and is an irrefragable proof of his entire confidence in those gentlemen.

"*Camp above Trenton Falls,*
23d Dec. 1776.

"Dear Sir,

General Washington's letter to Colonels Reed and Cadwalader.

"The bearer is sent down to know whether your plan was attempted last night, and if not, to inform you that Christmas day at night, one hour before day, is the time fixed upon for our attempt on Trenton. For Heaven's sake, keep this to yourself, as the discovery of it may prove fatal to us—our numbers, sorry am I to say, being less than I had any conception of; but necessity, dire necessity, will, nay must, justify an attack. Prepare, and in concert with Griffin, attack as many of their posts as you possibly can with a prospect of success; the more we can attack at the same instant the more confusion we shall spread, and greater good will result from it.

"If I had not been fully convinced before of the enemy's designs, I have now ample testimony of their intentions to attack Philadelphia, so soon as the ice will afford the means of conveyance.

"As the colonels of the continental regiments might kick up some dust about command, unless Cadwalader is considered by them in the light of a brigadier, which I wish him to be, I desired General Gates, who is unwell, and applied for leave to go to Philadelphia, to endeavour, if his health would permit him, to call and stay two or three days at Bristol in his way.

"I shall not be particular; we could not ripen matters for an attack, before the time mentioned in the first part of this letter; so much out of sorts, and so much in want of every thing are the troops under Sullivan, &c. The letter herewith sent, forward on to Philadelphia; I

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could wish it to be in time for the southern post's departure, which will be I believe by 11 o'clock to-morrow.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"GO. WASHINGTON.

"*P. S.* I have ordered our men to be provided with three day's provisions ready cooked, with which and their blankets they are to march; for if we are successful, *which Heaven grant*, and the circumstances favour, we may push on. I shall direct every ferry and ford to be well guarded, and not a soul suffered to pass without an officer's going down with the permit. Do the same with you.

"*To Joseph Reed, esq. and in his absence to John Cadwalader, esq. only, Bristol.*"

Wilkinson joins St. Clair's brigade.

When I joined the troops under General Washington, I found General St. Clair near head quarters, and resumed my station of brigade major in his family, but at General Gates's particular request, I obtained permission to accompany him to Newtown, Bucks county where he took quarters. On the 23d December he informed me he should the next day set out for Baltimore, and pressed me to accompany him as far as Philadelphia. I accordingly applied to General St. Clair for leave, who observed that he should "*have no objection, if he did not think it interested my honour, at that time, to remain with the brigade.*" This was incomprehensible to me, and not understanding it, I laid less stress upon it than I ought to have done. I however determined to abandon all thoughts of the ride to Philadelphia; but when I visited Newtown the next morning to take leave of General Gates, I was prevailed on to change my purpose, and we set out for the city the same day. On the road the General appeared much depressed in mind, and frequently expressed the opinion, that while General Washington was watching the enemy above Trenton, they would pri-

Accompanies General Gates to Philadelphia.

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vately construct batteaux, pass the Delaware in his rear, and take possession of Philadelphia before he was aware of the movement; and that instead of vainly attempting to stop Sir William Howe at the Delaware, General Washington ought to retire to the south of the Susquehanna, and there form an army; he said it was his intention to propose this measure to Congress at Baltimore, and urged me to accompany him to that place. The proposition, after eighteen month's absence from home, was tempting, but my duty forbade the thought. It was dark when we entered Front street, and it appeared as if we had penetrated a wilderness of houses; such was the silence and stillness which prevailed, that the dropping of a stone would have been heard several squares, and the hoofs of our horses resounded in all directions. We alighted at the City tavern (now the Coffee house,) where some unpleasant altercation took place between the General and several gentlemen who called on him, and were connected with certain notables who had recently joined the enemy. After they retired, he wrote a letter to the commander in chief, with which he charged me, and I took leave of him. I was on horseback early the next morning, and reached Newtown about 2 o'clock. On my arrival there I discovered, to my surprise, that General Washington had transferred his quarters to that place, and had himself marched with the troops in that neighbourhood. From Colonel Harrison, the General's secretary, who had been left in charge of his papers, I received the necessary directions, and proceeded in quest of the troops, whose route was easily traced, as there was a little snow on the ground, which was tinged here and there with blood from the feet of the men who wore broken shoes. I got up with my brigade near M'Conky's ferry about dusk, and inquiring for the commander in chief, was directed to his quarters, I found him alone with his whip in his hand, prepared to mount his horse, which I perceived as I entered; when I presented the letter of General Gates to him, before receiving it, he ex-

Gloomy appearance of Philadelphia.

Is the bearer of a letter from General Gates to General Washington.

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claimed with solemnity, "What a time is this to hand me letters!" I answered that I had been charged with it by General Gates. "By General Gates! where is he?" "I left him this morning in Philadelphia." "What was he doing there?" "I understood him that he was on his way to Congress." He earnestly repeated "On his way to Congress!" then broke the seal, and I made my bow and joined General St. Clair on the bank of the river.

Enterprize against Trenton.

Boats were in readiness, and the troops began to cross about sunset, but the force of the current, the sharpness of the frost, the darkness of the night, the ice which made during the operation, and a high wind, rendered the passage of the river extremely difficult; and but for the stentorian lungs and extraordinary exertions of Colonel Knox,* it could not have been effected in season to favour the enterprize; indeed we were too late to have succeeded against an enemy less negligent and less secure, for it was 4 o'clock before the troops were formed and put in motion, at which time it began to hail and snow.

The disposition of attack was made for two columns; the left led by the commander in chief, who was accompanied by Generals Lord Stirling, Greene, Mercer, and Stevens, to make a circuit by the Pennington road† (A) and assault by King's, now Greene street (B); the right, under Major-general Sullivan, which included the brigade of St. Clair, to keep the river road by General Dickenson's house (C) and enter the town by Water street (D). To give time for General Washington to effect his "*detour*," that the attack might be simultaneous, General Sullivan was ordered to halt for a few minutes at the cross road, which leads to Howell's ferry (F), where he arrived about twilight. Soon after the halt, it was discovered by Captain John Glover of the Marblehead regiment,

* Afterwards Major-general Knox, and secretary of war under President Washington.

† See Atlas, No. II.

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that the best secured arms* of the officers were wet, and not in firing condition. The communication was made to General Sullivan in presence of General St. Clair and the officers of their suites. Sullivan cast a look at Sinclair and observed, "What is to be done?" who instantly replied, "You have nothing for it but to push on and charge." We soon marched, Colonel Stark in command of the advanced guard, the troops with orders to clear their muskets as they moved on in the best manner in their power, which occasioned a good deal of squibbing; in the mean time an officer was despatched to apprise the General of the state of our arms, who returned for answer by his aid-de-camp Colonel Samuel Webb, that we must "advance and charge." It was now broad day, and the storm beat violently in our faces; the attack had commenced on the left, and was immediately answered by Colonel Stark in our front, who forced the enemy's picket, and pressed it into the town, our column being close at his heels. The enemy made a momentary shew of resistance by a wild and undirected fire from the windows of their quarters which they abandoned as we advanced, and made an attempt to form in the main street, which might have succeeded but for a six gun battery opened by Captain T. Forest,† under the immediate or-

* The platoon officers carried fusees at that time.

† Captain Forest commanded our artillery on that memorable occasion, and followed the advance of the left column: General Washington kept near the front. As he approached the village, he inquired of an inhabitant, who was chopping wood by the road side, "Which way is the Hessian picket?" "I don't know," replied the citizen, waiving an answer. "You may speak," said Captain Forest, "for that is General Washington." The astonished man raised his hands to heaven, and exclaimed "God bless and prosper you, Sir;—the picket is in that house, and the sentry stands near that tree." Captain Washington immediately received an order to dislodge it, which he executed with promptitude, and the artillery being unlimbered, the column proceeded. When Forest's battery was opened, the General kept on the left, and advanced with it, giving objects of direction to his fire; his position was an exposed one, and he was frequently intreated to fall back, of which he took no notice: he had

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Conduct of Captain Thomas Forest, Captain William Washington, and Lieutenant James Monroe.

ders of General Washington, at the head of King's street, which annoyed the enemy in various directions; and the decision of Captain William Washington,* who, seconded by Lieutenant James Monroe,† led the advanced guard of the left column, perceiving that the enemy were endeavouring to form a battery, rushed forward, drove the artillerists from their guns, and took two pieces in the act of firing. These officers were both wounded in this charge; the Captain in his wrist, the Lieutenant through the fleshy part of his shoulder. These particular acts of gallantry have never been noticed, and yet they could not have been too highly appreciated, for if the enemy had got his artillery into operation in a narrow street, it might have checked our movement, and given him time to form and reflect; and if he had retired across the bridge in his rear and taken post, he would have placed a defile between us, which in our half naked, half frozen condition, he ought to have defended against our utmost efforts, and we in turn might have been compelled to retreat, which would have been fatal to us; but while I render justice to the services of Forest, Washington and Monroe, I must not withhold due praise from the dauntless Stark, who dealt death wherever he found resistance, and broke down all opposition before him.

Colonel Stark's conduct.

Pressed in front, and hearing our fire approach on their left, a troop of dragoons, with about five hundred infantry, took to flight across the Assanpink, and joined Count Donop at Bordentown; and Colonel Rahl, while exerting himself to form his dismayed and disordered corps, being shot from his horse, the main body retired by their right

turned the guns on the retreating enemy, when to an order for the discharge of cannister, Captain Forest observed, "*Sir, they have struck.*" "Struck!" replied the General. "Yes," said Forest, "*their colours are down.*" "So they are," observed the chief, and galloped towards them, followed by Forest and his whole command, who for a moment left their guns to see the show.

* Afterwards greatly distinguished as an officer of cavalry, and since a Brigadier-general.

† Now secretary of state.

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up the Assanpink, with the apparent inclination to escape to Princeton. General Washington instantly threw the brave Colonel Hand with his distinguished rifle corps in their way (G); and the Virginia troops under those gallant officers Colonels Scott and Lawson, with Josiah and Richard Parker, having gained their left (H), after some fluctuation in their movements, they halted, formed in order of battle, with their front to the south (I), and ordered their arms, which after a summons from the General, and a short pause, they agreed to surrender at discretion. I had been despatched to General Washington for orders, and rode up to him at the moment Colonel Rahl, supported by a file of sergeants, was presenting his sword. On my approach, the commander in chief took me by the hand, and observed, "*Major Wilkinson*, this is a glorious day for our country," his countenance beaming with complacency; whilst the unfortunate Rahl, who the day before would not have changed fortunes with him, now pale, bleeding and covered with blood, in broken accents seemed to implore those attentions, which the victor was well disposed to bestow on him. How awful the contrast; what a sad memento of the casualties of military life. Such are thy blessings, O WAR!—such the glories and the golden fruits "plucked from the cannon's mouth."

Colonel Rahl, the Hessian commander, wounded, and made prisoner.

In this affair we lost no officer, and those before mentioned with four men only were wounded, two were killed, and one frozen to death; our trophies were four stand of colours, twelve drums, six brass field pieces, a thousand stand of arms and accoutrements, and our prisoners twenty-three officers and almost 1,000 non-commissioned officers and privates; Colonel Rahl and six other officers, with about 40 men, were killed. The execution of this enterprize, reflected high honour on General Washington, but his triumph was abridged by the failure of two simultaneous attacks; one from Bristol under General Cadwalader, and the other by Trenton ferry under General Irwing, which made a part of his plan. Those

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officers employed every exertion to cross the river, but were baffled by the ice, and in consequence the fugitives escaped from Trenton, and Count Donop, with the detachments below, was enabled to make good his retreat to Princeton, otherwise these German cantonments would have been swept.

This was a desperate undertaking, justified by the deplorable state of our affairs, and worthy the chief who projected it. I have never doubted that he had resolved to stake his life on the issue. The joy diffused throughout the union by the successful attack against Trenton, reanimated the timid friends of the revolution, and invigorated the confidence of the resolute. Perils and sufferings still in prospect, were considered the price of independence, and every faithful citizen was willing to make the sacrifice. Success had triumphed over despondency, and the heedless, headlong enthusiasm, which led the colonists to arms, had settled down into a sober sense of their condition, and a deliberate resolution to maintain the contest at every hazard, and under every privation. The general impulse excited by passion was now approved by reason, and the American community began to feel and act like a nation determined to be free.

Public sentiment produced by the capture of the Hessians.

The militia of Philadelphia, who shewed a good countenance in the worst of times, were deeply chagrined because they could not co-operate with the continental troops on the 26th December; but being elated by our success, they became impatient for action, and crossed the Delaware near Bristol, to the number of 1,800, under Brigadier-general Cadwalader, and took post at Crosswick's; whilst a similar number, drawn by General Mifflin from the city and adjacent counties, crossed at various places, and rendezvoused at Bordentown about the same time. At this eventful epoch the masterly judgment of General Washington seems to have been beguiled by his good fortune, or the panic of the enemy after the affair of Trenton; for we find him again preparing* to

Pennsylvania militia cross the Delaware.

Dec. 27.

Reflections on General Washington's second

* See his letter to the President of Congress, Dec. 29.

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cross the Delaware to "pursue the enemy in his retreat; try to break up more of their quarters; and in a word, in every instance adopt such measures as the exigency of our affairs require, and our situation will justify." The original dispositions of this distinguished chief were certainly infected by a chivalrous spirit, which however corrected by self denial, however qualified by prudence and circumspection, displayed itself in this case; else he would hardly, without any very material change in their physical force, have ventured to advance on the enemy before whom he had so recently retreated, and placed a large river in his rear, which was daily expected to be rendered impassable by the ice. By this step he threw himself into a "*cul de sac*," with a corps numerically inferior to that of the enemy in his front, and in point of equipment and efficiency, with all the disadvantages of militia opposed to the veteran troops of Europe *in campaign;* yet under the guidance and protection of that God in whom he placed his trust, he extricated himself from this desperate situation, by converting his fault into a "*ruse de guerre*," which dismayed and disheartened the enemy, and suddenly deprived them of all their acquisitions south of Brunswick.

crossing of the Delaware.

Pursuant to his resolution, General Washington on Monday morning the 30th of December, 1776, again crossed the Delaware, and took post at Trenton; but owing to the drifting ice, the passage of the river had become extremely difficult and fatiguing, and the rear of the troops did not join him before the next evening. In the course of that day, Colonel Joseph Reed, with a reconnoitring party of twelve dragoons, was sent out to inquire for the enemy, of whom General Washington had no certain advice; and being well acquainted with the country, he surprised a commissary and foraging party, consisting precisely of equal numbers, whom he charged and made prisoners without the loss of a man, and after a few hour's absence, returned with every trooper his prisoner behind him. This little act of decisive gallantry, performed by independent gentlemen, tended to increase

Dec. 31. Exploit of Colonel Joseph Reed, and a squad of dragoons from the Philadelphia 1st troop.

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the confidence of the troops, and certainly reflected high honour on the small detachment,* which had been taken from the *patriotic old first troop of Philadelphia*, then commanded by that respectable citizen soldier Captain Samuel Morris. From that period the effect of the *esprit du corps* has been manifest in this troop, and it will never lose its merited superiority so long as it is composed of the flower of the first city of the union, and receives the orders of such a manly, honourable, ardent soldier as Captain Charles Ross, whose exact discipline, promptitude and vigilance in the late war, supported the ancient repute of the troop, and although unnoticed, give him and the gentlemen of his command strong claims to public distinction.

General Washington's embarrassments and resolution.

The information received from the prisoners, separately examined, left no doubt of the enemy's superiority, and his intention to advance upon us, which would put General Washington in a critical situation. To make a safe retreat was impracticable, should the enemy act with energy; and if it could be effected at all, it would depreciate the influence of antecedent successes, and check the rising spirit of the community; on the other hand to give battle under the circumstances of the manifest inequality which existed, would be to hazard the annihilation of the *Grand Army*, an event the most dangerous of all to the public cause; in this awful conjuncture the resolution adopted was the most acceptable to the feelings of a soldier. Brigadier-generals Mifflin and Cadwalader were ordered to join the General, and he determined to procrastinate the combat, until night if practicable, but to take post in A, A, A, behind the Assanpink,† a creek which divided the small village of Trenton; to wait the enemy's advance, and avail himself of circum-

* This detachment consisted of 2d Lieut. James Budden, Cornet John Dunlap, Thomas Leiper, 1st sergt., Samuel Howell, jun. 1st corporal, James Hunter, 2d corporal, George Campbell, John Donnaldson, Thomas Peters, William Pollard, Samuel Caldwell, Benjamin Randolph, John Lardner.

† See Atlas, No. III.

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stances; that is, to fight and die, if he could not conquer or extricate himself with honour. When the resolution was taken to order up Mifflin and Cadwalader, a heavy detachment under Brigadier-general de Roche Fermoy*, consisting of six pieces of artillery under Captain T. Forest, Hand's riflemen, a Virginia corps under Colonel Charles Scott,† and the German battalion of Haussegger,‡ was ordered forward, and took post at the Five Mile run, B, on the old road, pushing its picket to the village of Maidenhead, C, whilst the main body of the enemy were assembled in Princeton, with its advanced guard at Cochran's, D, and its patrols in motion as far as the Eight Mile run. Such was the position of the two armies on the night of the 1st of January, 1777. Great exertions had been made the preceding evening to induce the continental troops, whose term of service expired at 12 o'clock, P. M. to remain with the General, and stick by the cause of the country; the men were addressed by companies, regiments, brigades and divisions, and finally after all the persuasive arts were exhausted, 1,200, or 1,400 consented to engage for an additional six weeks on the receipt of ten dollars bounty; this was, of necessity, conceded by the General, whose whole force then consisted of this number of continental troops, engaged for six weeks, and 3,500 or 600 Pennsylvania volunteer militia; that of the enemy was estimated at 8,000 combatants, artillery, dragoons, and infantry duly proportioned: how dreadful the odds, how eventful the succeeding day, on which the fate of General Washington, and his army, might have been decided, but for the obstinate resistance of a handful of brave men, and the workings of Heaven in the breast of Lord Cornwallis.

Jan. 1. Position of the two armies, and comparative force.

* This man, like De Woedtke, turned out a worthless drunkard, although he wore the croix de St. Louis.

† Afterwards Brigadier-general and late governor of Kentucky.

‡ Who did not acquit himself with reputation, and was afterwards cashiered.

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Major Henry Miller* of the rifle corps, had charge of the guards of our advance, on the night of the first, and about 12 o'clock, in returning from the rear to the front, he met General Fermoy on his way to Trenton; the enemy were in motion early on the 2d, and about sunrise a mounted yager, belonging to the advanced patrole, in pursuit of a citizen of the name of Hunt,† ran in upon our picket at Maidenhead, and was shot from his horse. On hearing this shot, the advanced party at Five Mile run, stood to their arms, but missing the General, some embarrassment ensued, which was soon removed by Major Miller, and Colonel Hand took the command of the troops, and retired leisurely before the enemy, until orders were received from the commander in chief, to dispute every inch of the ground where practicable; Colonel Hand then faced about, and advanced to meet the enemy, when a skirmish commenced, that was continued at inter-

Gallantry of Colonel Hand and Major Miller of the rifle corps.

* General Miller, late of Baltimore, who was distinguished for his cool bravery wherever he served, and certainly possessed the entire confidence of General Washington.

† Extract of a letter from a respectable inhabitant, dated *Lawrenceville, August 22d*, 1816:—

"On the 2d of January, 1777, the British army advanced from Princeton, preceded by mounted Hessian yagers, who fell in with Elias Hunt, about three-fourths of a mile in advance of the American picket, who was posted opposite the church in Maidenhead (now Lawrence), in his private dwelling house, his family having previously deserted it. Hunt was mounted, and pursued by a party of horse in full speed till he had passed the guard, one of which was in advance of the rest with his sword ready to make the blow, when the guard fired and wounded him, but he did not fall from his horse. At this time a bugle sounded in the rear, and he attempted to return, but a second fire killed the horse and rider: this happened about 11 o'clock, A. M. Howe's army continued to advance till they came to what is called the Five Mile run, where a guard was also stationed, and some skirmishing ensued with Colonel Hand's riflemen, who then retreated, and made a stand on the south side of Shabbakong creek, in a wood on both sides of the road, and continued to annoy the British army, until they arrived within a mile of Trenton. The British army did not quarter or encamp with us; they performed the march between sun and sun on the same day."

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vals throughout the day, in which Colonel Hand's riflemen and Captain Forest's artillery were particularly distinguished. The right bank of the rivulet of Shabbakong was at that period covered with a close wood a mile in depth, whilst the opposite side presented open fields; Colonel Hand, who brought up the rear with his riflemen, determined to waste as much time as possible for the enemy at this point; he accordingly secreted his men some distance within the wood, e, e,* on the flanks of the road, posting Major Miller on the left, and in person taking command on the right: in this position he waited for the flank and advanced guards of the enemy, until they came within point blank shot, and then he opened a deadly fire from his ambush, which broke and forced them back in great confusion on the main body, closely pursued by the riflemen. The boldness of this manœuvre menacing a general attack, induced the enemy to form in order of battle, d, d, to bring up his artillery, and open a battery with which he scoured the wood for half an hour before he entered it: this operation consumed two hours, during which time the rifle corps took breath, and were ready to renew the skirmish. The brigade of General St. Clair, with two pieces of artillery, I think under Captain Sergeant,† were assigned to the defence of the fords of the Assanpink, b, b, b, b, on the right of our line: the enemy's flankers reconnoitred those fords, but finding them guarded, joined their main body: my station gave me a fair view of the left flank of the enemy's column, after it had passed the wood from Shabbakong, and wheeled to their right on the margin of the high ground, E, which leads to Trenton. About half a mile advanced from the northern extremity of the buildings of this place, on the old road to Princeton, there is a ravine, F, which crosses the road at right angles, and descends to the plain of Assanpink; on the south-western verge of this hollow, our advanced party made their last stand, in which the Vir-

Position of St. Clair's brigade near Trenton.

* See Atlas, No. IV.

† Since governor of the Mississippi territory.

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ginia troops, under Colonels Scott and Lawson and Majors Josiah and Richard Parker, with Forest and his field pieces, distinguished themselves.

Skirmish near Trenton described.

The battery, covered by about six hundred men, opened on the column of the enemy, and was presently answered by a counter-battery; the cannonade continued twenty or twenty-five minutes, when the British column was partially displayed, and advanced in line: the firing of the musketry was soon mingled with that of the artillery, but the enemy preserved his front, and being of threefold numbers, continued to advance until he forced our corps to retire by the bridge across the Assanpink. I had a fair flank view of this little combat from the opposite side of the Assanpink, and recollect perfectly the sun had set, and the evening was so far advanced, that I could distinguish the flame from the muzzles of our muskets. Anterior to this skirmish, General Washington, who stood fairly committed to a general action, if the enemy had pressed it, feeling how important it was to retard the march of the enemy until nightfall, rode up to the advanced party with Generals Greene and Knox, thanked the detachment, and particularly the artillery, for the services of the day, gave orders for as obstinate a stand as could be made on that ground, without hazarding the pieces, and retired to marshal his troops for action, behind the Assanpink.

Jan. 2. Position of the two armies at dusk.

After forcing our advanced party, the enemy took post in our front, at about 1000 yards distance, with the intervention of the village (now city) of Trenton, and the Assanpink creek, which was every where fordable below the mill: a cannonade ensued between the two armies with little effect, during which Lord Cornwallis displayed his columns, and extended his lines, g, g, g, g, to the westward, on the heights above the town. If there ever was a crisis in the affairs of the revolution, this was the moment; thirty minutes would have sufficed to bring the two armies into contact, and thirty more would have decided the combat; and, covered with wo, Columbia might have wept the loss of her beloved chief and most valorous

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Proposition of Lord Cornwallis answered by Sir William Erskine.

sons. In this awful moment, the guardian angel of our country admonished Lord Cornwallis, that his own troops were fatigued, and that the Americans were without retreat; and under this impression, he addressed his general officers, "*the men had been under arms the whole day; they were languid and required rest; he had the enemy safe enough, and could dispose of them the next morning; for these reasons he proposed that the troops should make fires, refresh themselves, and take repose.*" General Grant, his second, acquiesced, and others followed, but Sir William Erskine exclaimed, "*My Lord, if you trust those people to-night, you will see nothing of them in the morning.*" This admonition was not regarded, and the enemy made their fires and went to supper, as we did also, our advanced sentries being posted within 150 yards of each other. Between this situation of the armies of General Washington and Lord Cornwallis on the 2d of January, and those of General Burgoyne and General Gates on the 20th of September following, a striking analogy is perceptible in the most important incidents, and we discover in the events by what trivial circumstances the destinies of armies and of states are controuled.

If General Washington by a false step, from which mortal man is not exempt, had committed himself to an almost hopeless condition, the dispositions he adopted to harass and retard the advance of the enemy, were the most sagacious his situation admitted; and the zealous, active, courageous agents of his will, on the 2d of January, 1777, should be distinguished by grateful recollections and the public favour. Of those revolutionary worthies known to the writer, Hand, Scott, Lawson, Josiah and Richard Parker, and David Harris of Baltimore, repose in the grave, but Miller, and Forest, and Hamilton, still live.

Immediately after dark, a council of war was convened at General St. Clair's quarters, south of the creek, and, if memory serves me, in the house of a Miss Dagworthy, for General Washington had been driven out of

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his own quarters by the enemy. It may be proper to remark, that what follows with respect to the council of war, I received from General St. Clair, to whose person I was attached.

Council of war, and various opinions.

General Washington, encompassed as he was by dangers, had but a brief statement to submit to his council; the situation of the two armies were known to all; a battle was certain, if he kept his ground until the morning, and in case of an action a defeat was to be apprehended; a retreat by the only route thought of, down the river, would be difficult and precarious; the loss of the corps he commanded might be fatal to the country: under these circumstances he asked advice—opinions were various—some inclined to retreat, others to hazard all on a general engagement, and it has been suggested to me, that the commander in chief, yielding to his natural propensities, favoured the latter proposition.

I have before observed that General St. Clair had been charged with the guard of the fords of the Assanpink, and in the course of the day whilst examining the ground to his right, he had fallen on the road which led to the Quaker bridge; whether from this circumstance, or what other information I will not presume to say, it was this officer who in council suggested the idea of marching by our right and turning the left of the enemy; the practicability of the route was well understood by Colonel Reed, adjutant-general; and the commander in chief, as soon as satisfied on this point, adopted the proposition; and the more effectually to mask the movement, he ordered the guards to be doubled, a strong fatigue party to be set to work on an intrenchment across the road near the mill, within distinct hearing of the sentinels of the enemy, the baggage to be sent to Burlington, the troops to be silently filed off by detachments, and the neighbouring fences to be used for fuel to our guards, to keep up blazing fires until toward day, when they had orders to retire.

Proposition of General St. Clair adopted.

The night, although cloudless, was exceedingly dark, and though calm most severely cold, and the movement was so cautiously conducted as to elude the vigilance of

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the enemy. Lieutenant-colonel Sherman led the advanced guard, and the brigade of St. Clair, with two six pounders, followed, which placed me at the head of the column near General Washington. I have recently examined the route of this night's march, and with the assistance of several contemporaries have given it the direction of G, G, G, G,* which brought us to a small wood, A,† south of a Quaker meeting, B, on the left of Stoney brook, a little before sunrise, where the main column wheeled to the right, and turning the south-east corner of the wood, marched directly for Princeton, b, b, b, b, whilst General Mercer, accompanied by several volunteers, with a detachment consisting of the fragments of Smallwood's regiment, commanded by Captain Stone,‡ the first Virginia regiment commanded by Captain Fleming, and two field pieces under Captain Neal, and probably other corps which I do not recollect, but in the whole certainly not exceeding 350 men, marched immediately up Stoney brook, f, as I was informed at the time, to take possession of the bridge, g, for the double purpose of intercepting fugitives from Princeton, and to cover our rear against Lord Cornwallis from Trenton. The morning was bright, serene, and extremely cold, with an hoar frost which bespangled every object. A brigade of the enemy, commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Mawhood, consisting of the 17th, 40th, and 55th regiments, with three troops of dragoons, had quartered in Princeton§ the preceding night; the 17th had marched to join Lord Cornwallis, and its front had reached Cochran's on the hill, at d, whilst the head of our column had gained the point, b, when casting my eyes towards the Trenton

Night march to turn the left flank of the enemy.

General Mercer, and his command and movement.

* See Atlas, No. V.

† See Atlas, No. VI.

‡ Afterwards governor of Maryland.

§ I have always been staggered as to the fact of a British brigade having halted at Maidenhead, the night of the 2d of January, when Lord Cornwallis lay at Trenton, only six miles distant, with the intention to engage the next morning; yet it is so recorded in British and American history, though the inhabitants of that village now deny the assertion.

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road, I discerned the enemy, by the reflection of their arms against the rising sun, ascending the hill in the wood near Cochran's; and perceiving Colonel R. Harrison, the General's secretary, near me, I called him, and was about to shew him the spectacle which had caught my eyes, when it suddenly disappeared, and two horsemen leaped a fence, and advanced to a, a, reconnoitred us a minute or two, and returned to the road, soon after which we observed the line come to the right about and descend the hill in quick time. When Colonel Mawhood, who commanded the 17th regiment, discovered the head of our column at h, he did not perceive General Mercer, who was marching up the creek near its left bank, and taking us for some light party, as the ground concealed our numbers, he determined to retrograde and cut us up; nor had General Mercer any suspicion of the proximity of Mawhood's corps, until he recrossed Stoney brook, when a mutual discovery was made at less than 500 yards distance, and the respective corps then endeavoured to get possession of the high ground on their right. The Americans marching by c, c, reached the house and orchard of William Clark, 5, 5, but perceiving the British line advancing on the opposite side of the height, and a worm fence between them, they pushed through the orchard, and anticipated their antagonists by about forty paces.* The two lines are represented by 1, 2, and 3, 4; the Americans covered by the fence, the British in air, their left bearing on a large chesnut tree, then in vigour, now represented by the remains of a stump on the north-west edge of the turnpike,† about half a mile north of Stoney brook, their right extending obliquely from the turnpike to a small knoll, on which a solitary oak is now standing, covered by two field pieces. The first fire was delivered by General Mercer, which the enemy returned with a volley, and instantly charged; and many of our

The enemy discovered.

Turns about to give us battle.

Position of Mercer and Mawhood.

A brief sketch of the affair of Princeton.

* I have measured the ground.

† This road cuts the position of the American line obliquely about the centre.

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men being armed with rifles, they were forced after the third round to abandon the fence, and fled in disorder.

The head of our column had now arrived at D, and although my view of the combatants engaged in this short, sharp, close rencontre was obstructed by a swell in the ground, the retreat of the Americans by William Clark's house and barn, 5, 6, was under my eyes, and I noted it to General St. Clair, who charged me not to mention the circumstance, lest it should affect our own troops. The time from the discharge of the first musket, until I perceived our troops retreating, did not exceed five minutes, and I well recollect that the smoke from the discharge of the two lines mingled as it rose, and went up in one beautiful cloud. On hearing the fire, General Washington directed the Pennsylvania militia to support General Mercer, and in person led them on with two pieces of artillery, under Captain William Moulder of the city of Philadelphia, who formed in battery on the right of Thomas Clark's house, 7; the enemy pursued the detachment of General Mercer as far as the brow of the declivity, o, o, o, o, when discovering our whole army, instead of a partisan corps, they halted and brought up their artillery; and being encouraged by the irresolution of the militia, notwithstanding the exertions of the commander in chief, and their immediate officers to press them forward, they attempted with a company of infantry to carry Captain Moulder's battery,* but being galled by his grape, and perceiving Hitchcock's and another continental regiment break off and advance from the rear of our column, after a few long shot with the militia, they retreated precipitately, leaving their artillery on the ground, which for want of horses we could not carry off. In this place I must be permitted to state a fact in contradiction of every historical account I have seen:—Be-

* This company of militia artillery from Philadelphia was almost as much distinguished in its line, as the troop of dragoons, and on this day attracted the particular attention of General Washington; that honest man and good citizen, Colonel William Linnard, of Philadelphia, was a subaltern of the company, and stood by one of the pieces.

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Conduct of Lt. Col. Mawhood.

fore the fire had ceased at the first onset, Lieutenant-colonel Mawhood, mounted on a brown poney, with ten or twelve file of infantry, and a pair of springing spaniels playing before him, crossed our line of direction, the men being in a trot, at s, s, so near, that if our advanced guard had not unwarrantably halted, he must have been intercepted or driven from his course; on observing the halt of our guard, General St. Clair directed me to gallop forward and order a charge, but it was too late, as Mawhood had passed, yet the fire of the guard knocked down two of his party.

The 17th regiment only engaged.

That this affair fell on the 17th regiment, I am satisfied from my own observation, which is supported by the Annual Register of 1777,* however incorrect in other particulars; the 55th regiment had advanced no further than the small wood, C, when the action terminated, and they returned and joined the 40th left in quarters at the college; these corps then advanced and took the position, K, detaching a heavy platoon to C, which induced the American continental troops to display in i, i, the intermediate ravine, the head of which is crossed by the present turnpike, is somewhat deep and steep; two regiments were ordered to attack, and had crossed the ravine and were ascending the opposite side within sixty or 80 yards of the enemy, who were still concealed from our view by the acclivity, when they turned about and precipitated themselves into the college, the windows of which were immediately knocked out, and we expected warm work; but before we got within a quarter of a mile, they rushed out at the front and retreated by files in t, t, t, t, crossed Millstone at Rocky hill, and made good their escape to Brunswick; they made so long a trail and moved in such loose disorder, that two troops of dragoons would have picked up the two regiments; unfortunately our whole cavalry consisted of twenty-two of the Philadelphia 1st troop, who were actively engaged in another quarter; there was but one gun fired at the

Formation and retreat of the 40th and 55th regiments.

* See pages 18 and 19.

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college, and this from a six pounder, by an officer who was not advised the enemy had abandoned it; the ball recoiled, and very nearly killed my horse as I was passing in rear of the building. CHAP. III.

Conduct of Colonel Hand, and retreat of the enemy.

At the time General Mercer engaged the 17th regiment, Colonel Hand endeavoured, by a rapid movement, to turn the enemy's left flank, and had nearly succeeded when they fled in disorder, not toward Maidenhead, as is stated by all the historians, but up the north side of Stoney brook, over fields and fences, without regard to roads, and inclining towards Pennington;* the riflemen were therefore the first in the pursuit, and in fact took the greatest part of the prisoners; they were accompanied by General Washington in person, with a squad of the Philadelphia troop, among whom Mr John Donaldson distinguished himself in an eminent degree: in the ardour of the pursuit he had separated himself from the troop, and as the infantry could not keep up, he found himself alone and liable to be shot by any straggler of the enemy who would not surrender; yet unwilling to slacken his pace, he mounted a Lieutenant Simpson behind him, who whenever a fugitive threatened to be refractory, jumped off and shot him, and in this manner three men, whilst taking aim at Mr. Donaldson, were knocked down and his life saved, but he made a score of prisoners, whom he sent to his rear after disarming them.—Simpson was afterwards a captain, and I saw him at his seat on the Susquehanna in the year 1796. It was on this occasion the late David Harris, esq. of Baltimore, who was a captain of riflemen, informed me that the General, whilst encouraging the pursuit, exclaimed "*It is a fine fox chase, my boys!*"—Such was the impetuosity of

* For this fact I will refer to General Washington's letter of the 5th of January, who says, "they were chased three or four miles, and that the enemy from Maidenhead was up with us before the pursuit was over," and also to Mr. John Donaldson of Philadelphia, and to General Henry Miller, now residing in the forks of Juniata and the Susquehanna, who was on that day major of Hand's riflemen.

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the man's character, when he gave reins to his sensibilities.

Our loss in the action of Princeton.

In this affair our numerical loss was inconsiderable—it did not exceed thirty; fourteen only were buried in the field;* but it was of great magnitude in worth and talents; Colonels Haslet and Porter, Major Morris, and Captain William Shippen were respected in their grades; Captains Fleming and Neal presented fair promises of professional excellence; but in General Mercer† we lost

* I had this fact lately from Joseph Clark, son of William, whose house still bears the marks of the enemy's shot, the lowest of which is eight or ten feet from the ground; his barn shews the mark of a cannon shot twenty feet from the ground.

† On the night of the 1st of January, General Mercer, Colonel C. Biddle, and Doctor Cochran, spent the evening with General St. Clair. Fatigued with the duties of the day, I had lain down in the same apartment, and my attention was attracted by the turn of their conversation, on the recent promotion of Captain William Washington, from a regiment of infantry to a majority of cavalry. General Mercer expressed his disapprobation of the measure; at which the gentlemen appeared surprised, as it was the reward of acknowledged gallantry; and Mercer, in explanation, observed: "We are not engaged in a war of ambition; if it had been so, I should never have accepted a commission under a man who had not seen a day's service (alluding to the great orator, and distinguished patriot, Patrick Henry); we serve not for ourselves but for our country, and every man should be content to fill the place in which he can be most useful. I know Washington to be a good captain of infantry, but I know not what sort of a major of horse he may make; and I have seen good captains make indifferent majors: for my own part, my views in this contest are confined to a single object, that is, the success of the cause, and God can witness how cheerfully I would lay down my life to secure it." The compact was sealed, and within thirty-six hours he received his mortal wounds from the bayonets of the enemy.

General Mercer, a Scotchman by birth, was a physician by profession, and I have heard the following interesting incident of his life: He served in the campaign of 1755, with General Braddock, and was wounded through the shoulder in the unfortunate action near Fort du Quesne; unable to retreat, he lay down under cover of a large fallen tree, and in the pursuit, an Indian leaped upon his covert immediately over him, and after looking about a few seconds for the direction of the fugitives, he sprang off without observing the wounded man who lay at his feet. So soon as the Indians had killed the wounded,

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a chief, who for education, experience, talents, disposition, integrity and patriotism, was second to no man but the commander in chief, and was qualified to fill the highest trusts of the country. The manner in which he was wounded, is an evidence of the excess to which the common soldiery are liable in the heat of action, particularly when irritated by the loss of favourite officers; being obstructed when advancing by a post and rail fence, in front of the orchard, it may be presumed the General dismounted voluntarily, for he was on foot* when the troops gave way; in exerting himself to rally them he was thrown into the rear, and perceiving he could not escape, he turned about somewhere near William Clark's barn, 6, and surrendered, but was instantly knocked down, and bayoneted thirteen times, when feigning to be dead, one of his murderers exclaimed, "Damn him he is dead, let us leave him." After the retreat of the enemy, he was conveyed to the house of Thomas Clark, 7, to whom he gave this account, and languished until the 12th, when he expired.†

Character of General Mercer.

Surrenders to the enemy, and is bayoneted.

The loss of the enemy was much more considerable in point of numbers, and Captain Leslie's death appeared to afflict the prisoners very sensibly. At their instance his body was conveyed to Pluckamin, and was there interred with the honours of war; on which occasion it was remarked, that many of the men, and particularly

Loss of the enemy.

scalped the dead, rifled the baggage, and cleared the field, the unfortunate Mercer, finding himself exceedingly faint and thirsty, from loss of blood, crawled to an adjacent brook, and after drinking plentifully, found himself so much refreshed, that he was able to walk, and commenced his return by the road the army had advanced; but being without subsistence, and more than an hundred miles from any Christian settlement, he expected to die of famine, when he observed a rattlesnake on his path, which he killed and contrived to skin, and throwing it over his sound shoulder, he subsisted on it as the claims of nature urged until he reached Fort Cumberland on the Potowmack.

* Joseph Clark informs me that his horse was observed after the action, with a fore leg broken by a shot.

† I had this account recently from Joseph Clark, who occupies the field of battle, and is nephew to Thomas.

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those of his company, wept bitterly. We conducted nine officers and about two hundred and thirty non-commissioned officers and privates to the same place, and about fifty more were captured and marched into Pennsylvania. In fact, the 17th regiment was dismembered, and the 40th and 55th suffered considerably by desertion and other casualties; the dragoons escaped to Trenton soon after we were discovered.

When the troops were assembled in Princeton, the absence of the General, who had been led away some distance in the pursuit of the fugitives, excited strong emotions of alarm for his safety, which he soon relieved by his presence. We found in the town some shoes and blankets, which were very opportune, and for my own part, I made a most seasonable acquisition in a breakfast at the provost's house, which had been prepared for a mess of the 40th regiment, who the steward informed me were sitting down as the fire commenced. Before we got clear of the town, our rear guard at Stoney brook under Brigadier-general Potter of the militia of Pennsylvania, was exchanging shot with the enemy from Trenton, and Captain Forest with his artillery was again engaged in covering our retreat.

Pressed as we were for time, it was the desire of the commander in chief, and the inclination of every officer, to make a stroke at Brunswick, which had been left with a small garrison, in charge of General Matthews; but our physical force could not bear us out; the men had been under arms eighteen hours, and had suffered much from cold and hunger. The commander and several general officers halted at the forks of the road in Kingston, whilst our troops were filing off to Rocky hill, when the exclamation was general, "O that we had 500 fresh men to beat up their quarters at Brunswick." But the measure was found to be impracticable, and therefore we proceeded down Millstone river, and halted at Somerset court-house, where many of the militia, whose baggage had been sent to Burlington, lay in the open air without blankets. We marched the next day to Pluckamin, and

The army halted at Somerset court-house.

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halted until the 5th. It had been previously determined by the General, on the advice of General St. Clair,* after the plan of visiting Brunswick had been abandoned, to take quarters at Morristown; but the troops were so much exhausted, that they required a short respite from fatigue. I think it was on the 5th, during our halt at Pluckamin, that General Washington made a pretext for sending a flag to Brunswick, of which his aid de camp, Colonel Fitzgerald, was the bearer: he was courteously received, and introduced to most of the general officers, who spoke freely of the trick General Washington had played them, and the race they had run, as they had made a forced march from Trenton to Brunswick—such was their alarm for the safety of their magazine. I ascribe to that visit, though with diffidence, the report of Sir William Erskine's having objected to Lord Cornwallis's postponement of his attack at Trenton, the evening of the 2d; indeed if my recollection does not deceive me, when on hearing the firing in the morning, Lord Cornwallis inquired what it could be, Erskine replied, "My Lord, it is Washington at Princeton." The recital of Captain Leslie's death, and the respect with which his body had been treated, affected General Leslie so sensibly, that he retired to a window and shed tears; and when Colonel Fitzgeral returned, he sent his acknowledgments to General Washington.

Reaches Morristown, and goes into quarters.

We reached Morristown the sixth, and the troops were cantoned in the vicinity. This position, little understood at the time, was afterwards discovered to be a most safe one for the winter quarters of an army of observation, and such was General Washington's; the approach to it from the sea-board is rendered difficult and dangerous by a chain of sharp hills, which extend from Pluckamin by Bound brook and Springfield to the vicinity of the Passaic river; it is situate in the heart of a country abounding with forage and provisions, and is nearly equidistant from New York and Amboy, and also

Advantage of that position.

* He was the only general officer acquainted with that quarter of the country.

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from Newark and New Brunswick, with defiles in rear to cover a retreat should circumstances render it necessary.

Before I close this chapter, I must be permitted to offer a tribute of justice to conspicuous worth. At a time when gloom pervaded the land, and hope had almost yielded to despair, it should never be forgotten that Captain Samuel Morris, with twenty-one gentlemen of Philadelphia, most of them with families, and all of them in independent circumstances, did in an inclement season, take leave of their domestic happiness and personal comforts, to rally around the standard of their country, and furnished an example, as rare as it was disinterested and patriotic. The following testimonial of General Washington is paramount to all praise, and I am apprehensive that any eulogium of mine, under all the circumstances, might incur the charge of presumption.

Discharge from General Washington.

"The Philadelphia troop of light horse, under the command of Captain Morris, having performed their tour of duty, I take this opportunity of returning my most sincere thanks to the Captain and to the gentlemen who compose the troop, for the many essential services which they have rendered their country, and to me personally, during the course of this severe campaign. Though composed of gentlemen of fortune, they have shewn a noble example of discipline and subordination, and in several actions have manifested a spirit and bravery which will ever do honour to them, and will ever be gratefully remembered by me.

"GO. WASHINGTON.

"*H. Quarters, Morristown, Jan.* 23*d*, 1777."

But it ought to be known, that the military merits and patriotism of the 1st troop of Philadelphia dragoons have been crowned by an act of liberality and benevolence, worthy of record in letters of gold. Having disbursed

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their own expenses during the war, at the return of peace, and on a final adjustment of their claims against the government for their services, they vested the amount in 16 shares of the capital stock of the bank of Pennsylvania, which they conveyed to the contributors of the Pennsylvania hospital, for the benefit of a lying-in and foundling hospital, and the donation is distinguished on the books of the institution, as "*the fund bestowed by the first troop of Philadelphia cavalry to the lying-in and foundling hospital.*" Thus the earnings of valour were bequeathed to the unfortunate victims of passion, and the hand of the patriot soldier contributed its mite, to the consolation of the sex which gave him life and cherished his infancy. The names of the twenty-two who lay on the borders of the enemy, and served under General Washington during an inclement season, as couriers, guards, patroles and videttes, were,

Samuel Morris, captain
James Budden, 2d lieut.
John Dunlap, cornet
Thomas Leiper, 1st sergt.
William Hall, 2d do.
Samuel Howell, jr. 1st corp.
James Hunter, 2d do.
Levi Hollingsworth
George Campbell
John Mease
Blair M'Clenachan
John Donaldson
Thomas Peters
William Pollard
James Caldwell
William Tod
Samuel Caldwell
John Lardner
Alexander Nesbet
Thomas Leaming
Jonathan Penrose
George Graff.

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CHAPTER IV.

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General Washington's situation.—His conduct contrasted with that of Sir William Howe.—General Howe's conduct canvassed.—Militia of the Jerseys reanimated.—Dictatorial powers granted to General Washington.—He appoints Major Wilkinson a lieutenant-colonel, and suffers him to choose his corps, and to appoint the officers of three companies.—Wilkinson sends out his recruiting parties and repairs to Philadelphia, where he finds General Gates in command.—The trial, condemnation, and execution of James Molesworth, a spy.—General Gates appointed to command the northern department, solicits Wilkinson to accompany him, who with the permission of General Washington resigns his commission of Lieut. Col. and follows Gates to Albany.—Reflections on this step, and the persecutions which ensued.—Arrives at Albany, and is sent to Ticonderoga.—Letters of 16th, 22d, and 26th May, from Major Wilkinson to General Gates.—Reflections on the loss of Ticonderoga.—The benefits resulting from this event.—Patriotic deliberations of Congress interrupted by personal and local prejudices.—Inconsistency of its proceedings.—General Schuyler reaches Albany, and resumes the command of the northern department.—General St. Clair ordered to the command of Ticonderoga, and arrives there.—Difficulties of his situation, reflections thereon and causes thereof.—His letter to the President of Congress.—Major Wilkinson appointed deputy adjutant-general.—His letters to General Gates, May 31, and of the 10th of June.—General Schuyler visits Ticonderoga.—A Council of war held.—Opinions of Colonel Wilkinson at that period, respecting the defence of the place.—Explanation had with General Schuyler,

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respecting his letter to General Gates of June 10th.—General Schuyler leaves Ticonderoga.—Wilkinson's letter to General Gates, June 25th.

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THE continued fluctuation of numbers in General Washington's army, which now depended almost exclusively on the militia, again placed him in the power of the enemy; but fortunately the habitual indolence of Sir William Howe, or his disinclination to terminate the war, restricted his troops to their winter quarters. The extraordinary revolutions in our military affairs, and the very opposite conduct of the commanders towards the people of the country, worked a wonderful effect on popular sentiment; it went home to the feelings and interests of whig and tory, and cannot be more precisely defined than by the contrast of the following documents, which are certainly entitled to particular notice in these memoirs.

Extract from General Howe's orders to Colonel Count Donop, commander of the Hessian cantonments along the Delaware.

Conduct of Sir William Howe and General Washington.

"All salted meat and provisions, which may be judged to exceed the quantity necessary for the subsistence of an ordinary family, shall be considered as a magazine of the enemy, and seized for the king, and given to the troops as a saving for the public."

In this authentic warrant, no discrimination is made between the property of the loyal subject with his protection in his pocket, and the contumacious rebel who resisted the royal authority at every hazard; what was the conduct of General Washington?

EXTRACT FROM GENERAL ORDERS.

H. Q. Morristown, Jan. 22d, 1777.

"The General prohibits both the militia and continental troops, in the most positive terms, the infamous prac-

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tice of plundering the inhabitants under the specious pretext of their being tories. Let the persons of such as are known to be enemies of their country, be seized and confined, and their property disposed of as the law of the state directs. It is our business to give protection and support to the poor distressed inhabitants, not to multiply and increase their calamities. After the publication of this order, any officer, either militia or continental, found plundering the inhabitants, under the pretence of their being tories, may expect to be punished in the severest manner, and be obliged to account for every thing so taken.

"J. REED, *Adjutant-general.*"

The preceding order to Count Donop, was found at Bordentown, after his flight from that place; it was published in the Evening Post of Philadelphia, Jan. 28th, 1777, and will serve to prove to posterity, that while Sir William Howe neglected his duty to his sovereign, and permitted the brutal outrages and excesses* committed on the matron and the virgin of the Jerseys, which dishonour the military profession and disgrace the pages of history, he not only connived at, but expressly sanctioned the spoliation of private property, without respect to friend or foe, exhibiting a singular spectacle of apathy and indifference to the obligations of duty and sound policy, the claims of humanity, and the principles of religion.

If the yeomanry of the Jerseys, panic struck by the triumphant march of a victorious army, and seduced by the blandishments and fair promises of the British commissioners, shrunk from their duty and abandoned the standard of their country, in November and December, 1776, they discovered before January, 1777, that the powers of the invaders were limited, and the promises of

* See the testimony published in the Pennsylvania Evening Post, April 24th and 29th, May 1st, 3d, and 10th, 1777; and the Journals of Congress, 1777, p. 115, 116.

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the commissioners perfidious. Stung with remorse by the retrospect of their pusillanimity, and fired with indignation by the outrageous injuries they had suffered, they again resumed their arms, and the old and the young, determined to avenge their wrongs upon the authors of their misery, and the enemies of their country: henceforward the militia of the Jerseys stood pre-eminent among the defenders of the public cause; they hovered around the enemy, and harassed him whenever he stepped beyond his stationary guards; the aged watched, explored, designed—the youth, alert, courageous, and ever ready for the onset, planted a hedge of pickets in General Washington's front, to abate his painful solicitudes, to conceal his nakedness, and support the revolution, during the period in which a second army was totally disbanded, and a third levied under the eyes of the British commander, who with 27,000* veteran troops of Europe at his disposal, made no exertion to discourage the recruiting of the American corps, or to recover the ground he had lost.

Apathy of the British commander.

The continued pressure of General Washington's difficulties are best described in his correspondence. On the 19th of January, 1777, he writes the president of Congress from Morristown: "The fluctuating state of our army, composed chiefly of militia, bids fair to reduce us to the situation in which we were some time ago; that is, of scarcely having any army at all. One of the battalions from the city of Philadelphia goes home to-day, and the other two remain a few days through courtesy. The time for which a country brigade under General Mifflin came out is expired, and they stay from day to day by dint of solicitation, their numbers much reduced by desertion. We have about 800 of the eastern continental troops remaining of 1200 or 1400, who first agreed to stay; part engaged to the last of this month, part to the middle of next. The five Virginia regiments are reduced

The continued distress of General Washington.

* See Letters to a Nobleman on the Conduct of the War, printed by J. Wilkie, London, 1777—also General Robinson's Testimony before the House of Commons.

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to a handful of men, as are Colonel Hand's, Smallwood's, and the German battalion. A few days ago, General Warner arrived without about 700 Massachusetts militia, engaged to the 15th March. Thus you have a sketch of our present army, with which we are obliged to keep up appearances before an enemy already double to us in numbers, and who from every account are withdrawing their troops from Rhode Island, to form a junction of their whole army, and make another attempt to break up ours, or penetrate towards Philadelphia; a thing by no means difficult now, *as the ice affords an easy passage over the Delaware.*" And in a letter to the commanding officer in Philadelphia, dated Head Quarters, Morristown, Jan. 24th, 1777, he says, "My situation will not admit of the smallest delay, in despatching and forwarding to this place all the troops in Philadelphia. Let the utmost expedition be used in fitting them out, as fast as they arrive, and no time be lost in sending them on under proper officers."

Jan. 5. Colonel Spencer and General Dickinson distinguish themselves in the petit guerre.

In such circumstances, this resurrection of the dormant spirit of the Jerseys was most critical; the first notable manifestation of it was made by Colonel Spencer, who with an equal number of militia attacked fifty Waldeckers near Springfield, killed ten, and made the rest prisoners with two commissioned officers. This cheering success was followed by a stroke of more importance. General Dickinson, with four hundred Jersey militia and fifty Pennsylvania riflemen, attacked a foraging party of the enemy of equal numbers, with three field pieces, and charged them so vigorously, that they gave way and abandoned their convoy, but carried off their killed and wounded: in this affair General Dickinson acquired much credit; he made nine prisoners, and took forty wagons, with upwards of 100 English draft horses, and a number of sheep and cattle which the enemy had collected; and soon after this brilliant exploit, Colonel Nelson of Brunswick, who was an exile from his domicile, with 150 yeomanry, surprised and captured a major and fifty-nine loyalists in British pay. This current of

Colonel Nelson's enterprize. Feb. 18.

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good fortune on our part depressed the confidence of the enemy, raised the spirits of the country, and produced the most happy effects on the recruiting service.

Dec. 27. 1776. Extensive powers conferred on General Washington.

Moved by the representations of General Washington and the desperate state of public affairs, the Congress had on the 27th of December reluctantly conferred on him very extensive general powers,* with specific authority to appoint and levy sixteen battalions of infantry, three thousand cavalry, three regiments of artillery, and a corps of engineers; and he lost no time in entering upon the organization and appointment of these corps. Shortly after our arrival at Morristown, he did me the honour to offer me a lieutenant-colonelcy† in one of the sixteen battalions, which I accepted, and was arranged to that of Colonel Nathaniel Guest; but being informed that this gentleman had been bred on the southern fron-

Major Wilkinson is appointed a Lieut. Colonel, Jan 12. 1777.

* "*Friday, December 27th*, 1776.

"The Congress having maturely considered the present crisis, and having perfect reliance on the wisdom, vigour and uprightness of General Washington, do hereby resolve, that General Washington shall be, and he is hereby vested with full, ample and complete powers to raise and collect together, in the most speedy and effectual manner, from any or all of these United States, sixteen battalions of infantry, in addition to those already voted by Congress; to appoint officers for the said battalions of infantry; to raise, officer, and equip 3000 light horse, three regiments of artillery, and a corps of engineers, and to establish their pay; to apply to any of the states for such aid of the militia as he shall judge necessary; to form such magazines of provisions, and in such places as he shall think proper; to displace and appoint all officers under the rank of Brigadier-general, and to fill up all vacancies in every other department in the American armies; to take, wherever he may be, whatever he may want for the use of the army, if the inhabitants will not sell it, allowing a reasonable price for the same; to arrest and confine persons who refuse to take the continental currency, or are otherwise disaffected to the American cause; and return to the states of which they are citizens, their names, and the nature of their offences, together with the witnesses to prove them.—That the foregoing powers be vested in General Washington for and during the term of six months from the date hereof, unless sooner determined by Congress."

† I was then in my twentieth year.

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tier, I was fearful a difference of education might be prejudicial to the harmony of the corps, and took the liberty to offer the suggestion to the General, who was pleased to say, that it was "to remedy the defects of lax discipline and polite manners, he had attached me to the corps of Colonel Guest, who although a rough was a brave and a good man." My apprehensions of the contact were not however removed, and finally the General indulged me with an election, and I chose Colonel Thomas Hartley, with whom I had served in Canada, for my immediate superior. My instructions for the recruiting service were soon arranged, and I repaired to Maryland, with authority to appoint officers to three companies, for whom I received blank commissions from General Washington, to be filled up at my discretion.

I left head quarters at Morristown in the Jerseys about the 15th of January, and hastened to the place of my designation, where I proceeded to a selection of platoon officers for the three companies, to be appointed by me, and among those of my appointment, I recollect Captain Benjamin Stoddert,* since secretary of the navy, the valued friend of my youth and age, Captain Richard Wilson of Queen Ann county, an esteemed and respectable acquaintance, who made a brilliant officer, and Lieutenant Henry Carberry, late a colonel in the army. Having completed the appointments depending on me, and put my recruiting parties in operation, I returned to Philadelphia, the regimental rendezvous, the beginning of March, where I found General Gates in command, and he immediately invited the renewal of the intimacy with which he had honoured me the preceding campaign.

Trial, condemnation and execution of James Molesworth.

Soon after my arrival in Philadelphia, I was ordered on the trial of James Molesworth, accused of being a spy from the enemy, and for endeavouring to inveigle three pilots into their service, to conduct their ships of war to the attack of the city of Philadelphia. This case was the

* Stoddert was wounded in the battle of Brandywine, and Carberry on General Sullivan's expedition against the Indians.

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first which had occurred after the revolt of the colonies, and several circumstances occurred to produce embarrassments; the law martial could alone apply to the offence charged against the culprit, but it had not been committed within the precincts of a military camp or garrison, nor was the attempt made on a military character; yet it was hostile to the revolutionary cause—the example was dangerous in its tendency, and the public safety required it should be nipped in the bud, to deter evil doers from the repetition of it; the Congress interposed its omnipotent and unrestrained authority; Major-general Gates ordered the court, approved the sentence, and directed the execution, but submitted the proceedings to Congress, who after reading the same, declared, "and it appearing thereby that the same James Molseworth is found guilty of the crimes laid to his charge, and sentenced to suffer death, resolved, that Congress approve the sentence aforesaid, and confirm the orders of General Gates for the execution of it;" and he was accordingly executed—but the opinion of the court was not unanimous. This victim of policy was obscure in his birth and circumstances, with an exterior of simplicity and meekness; he appeared strongly attached to a female, who was suspected of an intimacy with a Mr. F——s, and I frequently, by order, visited him in his cell, with promises of pardon, if he would discover his accomplices: his extreme sensibility and religious devotion affected my heart, and I felt as if I could have given half my existence to have saved him; but he made no confession, nor did he implicate any person, though he wrote several ambiguous and incoherent notes to the female alluded to.

On the 25th of March, General Gates was again appointed to the command of the northern department,* General Gates appointed to

* "*Philadelphia, March 26th*, 1776.

"Sir,

"I had the honour to receive your excellency's letter of yesterday evening, and am happy in being again appointed to the important

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the command of the northern department.

and urged me so strongly to accompany him, that I at length consented, provided General Washington would permit me; and to ascertain his will I mounted my horse and waited on him at Morristown. I arrived in the evening, and when I presented myself, found him alone; he received me kindly, but when I opened my business, by asking leave to resign my lieutenant-colonelcy, he seemed piqued, and asked me what I proposed to do; I answered, "to accompany General Gates." He enquired "for what reason?" I replied, that I had "served in the northern department, had made observations on the topography of the country, which I believed would enable me to render more service there than elsewhere, and I had understood it was probable the most active operations would be in that quarter." He replied "I would to God, gentlemen could for once know their own minds; I have been endeavoring to form a register of the army, but meet with so many caprices, that I fear it will be impossible; but if you have a mind to resign, you have my permission." At this last expression my young heart leaped with joy, so warmly had General Gates attached it to him, by his indulgence of my self love. I took leave of General Washington with grateful acknowledgments, and returned to Philadelphia on the wings of impatience, to equip myself for the campaign, and follow General Gates, who had set out for Albany the beginning of April.

Wilkinson with permission of General Washington, sacrifices his commission to accompany General Gates.

command of the northern department. The honourable the Congress may rest assured of my utmost diligence and ability being exerted in their service: my firm integrity and warmest gratitude are also due to the United States for this mark of respect from you, Sir, and the Congress. I propose leaving this city on Monday morning, and shall proceed without delay to execute the duties of my station. That the events of the ensuing campaign may fill with joy the friends of freedom, and satisfy the appointments of Congress, is the ardent wish of

"Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

"HORATIO GATES, *Major-general.*

"*His Excellency Gen. George Washington, Commander in Chief, Head Quarters, Morristown.*"

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I intreat the particular attention of the reader to this transaction, because it will prove that the pride of military ambition had not then infected my bosom, and my whole soul was devoted to the cause of my country; it is true, I was emulous of distinction, but it was more the distinction of service, than that of rank: Heaven will bear me witness, that I now record what I then felt, and the precious sentiment has been illustrated by my subsequent conduct; but it will be recollected by my contemporaries, that the calumnies wherewith my character was assailed in the bud of life, were signalised by imputations of ingratitude to General Gates; that these have been made auxiliary to the more modern slanders, with which I have been persecuted, and that the incongruous mass has been carefully handed down to posterity, by men whose malevolence is insatiable; those warm hearted, candid and ingenuous characters, who have been prejudiced against me by misrepresentations, will perceive on the perusal of these sheets, that I made my noviciate in arms at my own expense, and at the sacrifice of an honourable profession; that under the patronge and personal observation of General Washington, I mounted from a company to a lieutenant-colonelcy in the line, and that at the instance of General Gates, surely to serve him and not myself, at a time when I did not owe him a shadow of obligation, I was induced after almost two years of incessant active service, between the Atlantic and the St. Lawrence, to resign my lineal rank and its emoluments, and to accept a subordinate station on the staff, from which I had been promoted. To military men this may appear a phenomenon, and the incident drew the following brief remark from the virtuous old General Armstrong, 'the hero of Kittanning,' when he heard it,—"Well, wonders will never cease, while lieutenant-colonels of the line resign to become majors of the staff; it is a new thing under the sun." But my motives have been explained, and must justify my conduct, or I shall cheerfully abide the censure of those who are not satisfied.

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I reached Albany the latter end of April, and was soon after despatched by General Gates, with instructions to examine and regulate the chain of communication with Ticonderoga, which depending on a combination of land and water transport, had in the course of the preceding winter been entirely deranged, by the negligence and misconduct of the public agents; and after performing this service, I was directed to take post at Ticonderoga, enter upon my functions of brigade major, and keep the General regularly advised of the state of the garrison, and every material occurrence. The following communications will best explain the manner in which I discharged my duty, and I submit them to the indulgent consideration of the reader, as the production of an ardent, inexperienced youth, who had not reached his twentieth year.

"Ticonderoga, May 16th, 1777.

"My dear General,

Letters of 16th, 22d, and 26th May, 1777, referred to.

"I arrived here on the 13th inst. and was politely received by General P——, who immediately ordered returns from the several departments under his command, which after a great deal of trouble, I have obtained, and now inclose you. Their inaccuracy I hope will be excused, as the adjutants are in general new hands, and the management of this department has degenerated incredibly. I flatter myself their next efforts will be more intelligible. Colonel Hay went yesterday to Skeensborough, and promised to meet this express at Fort Edward, with the state of that post, Wood creek, the Saw mill, &c. which I desired him to inclose to you.

"There is a general cry for clothing; the shirts in store are refused by the soldiery, and are in fact too mean to be worn: there is a total want of iron proper for mounting the artillery, and a great demand for arms and accoutrements; those arms which have lately arrived from Albany, were so flimsily repaired, as not to bear

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the transportation, which has put them in a worse condition than when they were sent away: hence I think will appear the absurdity of establishing the armoury at Albany, and the propriety of moving it to this post, where it is so immediately needed: the least injury to a firelock renders it useless until it has travelled to that place and back again, with the imminent risk (if a body may judge from present appearances) of being returned worse than it went away.

"This garrison is *considerably obliged* to Major Stevens* of the artillery, an active, honest, and industrious officer; he directs the laboratory, and will in a little time, if supplied with paper, fix ammunition enough for the troops. Your last campaign established a company of artificers under his direction, which you will now observe included in his return; they are an excellent set of hands, and will alone I think be able to prepare the wood work necessary for mounting the artillery destined for the post; but unless iron is furnished, this will be of no consequence. I inclose you the examinations of a number of tories, who were intercepted in arms on the east and west sides of the lake, and are now in custody. General P—— waits your orders respecting them.

"Whitcomb was detached on the 14th inst. with a party of 150 men, in quest of M'Alpin's crew, and will, I fancy, spare no pains to fall in with them.

"When I arrived here, I understood that the enemy were forming a post at Gilliland's creek, consisting chiefly of Indians and tories. I urged the necessity of immediately dislodging them, and the General has sent out a scout to reconnoitre their situation; his return will determine what must be done.

"The poor remains of our fleet, which might be rendered somewhat respectable, are at present in a most contemptible situation; without order, without any shade of regularity, and almost void of naval stores; it is badly

* Who commanded the American artillery at the convention of Saratoga.

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manned and miserably officered. Major Stevens prays a reinforcement of artillerists, as his corps is by no means capable of manning the different batteries, and he begs for field pieces.

"Several regiments at this post are torn to pieces by detachments, as you will observe by the returns: the officers earnestly wish to have them called in and incorporated, the good effects of which you are fully sensible of.

"I think yours or some other general's presence immediately necessary at this post, for be assured the garrison under the present dominion will in a short time be rendered a mere chaos. General P—— is a worthy good tempered member of society, and a man I esteem, but so little of the general, that he has no opinion of his own; indeed he is one of the most humble characters I ever knew; void of that authoritative decision which graces even error, he betrays all the timid diffidence of conscious ignorance. Pardon the freedom of my language; I speak to General Gates, but in him I hope I address a friend. The garrison increases rapidly: I hope in the course of a week to return you four thousand men, and am with the utmost respect my dear General's much obliged, obedient and ready servant,

"JA. WILKINSON.

"*Hon. Major-general Gates.*"

"*Ticonderoga, May 22d,* 1777.

"My dear General,

"The director* has taken so precipitate a flight from this place, that he leaves me scarce a minute to write to you. I wish to Heaven, either yourself or General St. Clair was here for a few days. Colonel Kosciusko is timidly modest—Baldwin is inclosing the lines on a plan of his own—General —— has arrived, he is a very inefficient officer, though somewhat more determined than ——. We are now about three thousand strong; the militia P. T. arrive in small regiments; the spy, through

* Doctor Potts, director of hospitals.

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the negligence of the guard at the landing place, has escaped. I dread the want of provisions more than men. I am at present a little indisposed, and am with the utmost respect, your much obliged, obedient and ready servant,

"JA. WILKINSON.

"*Hon. Major-general Gates.*"

"*Ticonderoga, May 26th,* 1777.

"My dear General,

"I now inclose you a general return of this garrison, but cannot tell whether it corresponds with the last, as I sent that off in such a hurry as not to reserve a copy. The adjutants, generally speaking, are blockheads, and two of the brigade majors are totally ignorant of their duty, so that this incorrect exhibition is the product of three days vexatious labour. Since General ——'s arrival on Tuesday last, we have brought all the continental troops, except Long's regiment, to this side of the lake, and have posted the militia on the mount, brigaded under Colonel Long, a genteel, amiable man. The troops on this side are formed under Brigadiers —— and P——. The stay of the militia is quite discretionary with the General, as they are turned out on this emergency without any limited term of duration, though they begin already to complain. You will find in these returns a very *treacherous* proportion of officers, and that several are furloughed in the original return; frauds which your or General St. Clair's presence is necessary to correct.

"Colonel Hay is an active officer, of more judgment than any one I know in this garrison. About one hundred and twenty of the men returned on command, are under his direction, and are I believe advantageously employed; the residue are under Colonel Baldwin, and on board the fleet, where I think economy is much needed; one whole company of carpenters are constantly employed in forming a kind of friezed abbatis, on the exterior of the *glacis of the French lines.* The works are precipitated on the plan laid down by Colonel Baldwin: the re-

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doubt at those lines goes on finely; it is formed by certain lines beginning at the east end of the curtain on which the three north embrasures are opened, and closing at the south sally-port. I believe my details have made more invalids than real disease, the complaints of many being very trivial; however, as I have no authority to obviate this subterfuge, they will continue to avail themselves of it. The muster-master is much wanted; he cannot arrive too soon. The artificers, and a number of workmen, are at present without arms, and as there is in use and in store a great proportion of bad ones, I think there appears an evident necessity of moving the armoury to this place immediately.

"My general is acquainted with the various precautions preparatory to successful defence; he knows the subject to be too complex for the comprehension of men of mean abilities, no education, and little experience:—what then must be the fate of this garrison under its present command? I give you my honour, at this moment, there is no disposition of defence made in case of an attack, or even alarm posts assigned; I shall endeavour to have the latter consideration settled this day. Providence yesterday exposed one point of our weakness, by ordering a gale of wind, which carried away and broke to pieces the boom, bridge, and every appendage thereof.

"Please to observe the proportion of officers in Whitcomb's corps; I cannot find out the establishment on which it is formed, and believe no person has before obtained a return from him. I inclose you his original, with the return of an associate, Captain Lee, a man of whom I can gain no satisfaction. I think if the public favour is bestowed, it ought to be on men of public benevolence at least.

"We have intelligence of the enemy's fleet being off Cumberland head: perhaps I may personally ascertain the truth of this information in a few days.

"I shall be proud to receive your commands respecting the future returns. A scout has this moment arrived who was yesterday chased near the Four Brothers, by

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four of the enemy's boats; he observed lying at that place a schooner, a pettiauger, and six or seven batteaux. I suppose they are taking off the wheat and stock which we have neglected to secure. To you, Sir, I have spoke plainly of men and things, because I thought it my duty, but expect, unless it becomes necessary, that my well meant candour will not involve me in controversy with men, whom I should in proper place respect.

"I have the honour to be,
"My dear General's
"Obliged and ready servant,
"JA. WILKINSON.

"*Hon. Major-general Gates.*"

In these letters the defenceless condition of this important fortress is exposed with much simplicity and truth, and the causes which led to the abandonment of it are obvious; yet, for the meritorious deed, the unfortunate St. Clair suffered the most merciless and unmerited persecutions; notwithstanding the calamity was produced by the improvidence and neglect of the national councils, and although it is manifest to every military man, that the abandonment of the place laid the foundation for the capture of General Burgoyne; an event which counterbalanced the adversities of the main army, produced the French alliance,* and accelerated the establishment of the national independence. —Reader! I conjure you to bear in mind, that whilst my humble pen is offering this small tribute to the merits and the services of a revolutionary chief; this illustrious citizen bending under a load of years, after having filled the highest offices of the state, on a miserable pittance, the effect of local bounty, not bestowed by the general government, but by the benevolence of

* Before this event reached Paris, I was assured by Commodore Nicholson and the Hon. William Carmichael, who were there, we had fallen into such disrepute, that the name of American was hooted.

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the state of Pennsylvania, is suffered to drag out life in indigence and obscurity.

About this period the noble patriotism and generous self denial, which had cemented the deliberations, united the energies, and guided the views of the Congress, began to be affected by personal bias and local prejudices; and the private animosities which sprung up, infected the first assembly of the world with intrigues and cabals, similar to those which distinguished a conclave of cardinals in the sixteenth century. On the 25th of March, without a reason assigned, Major-general Gates, by order of the Congress, superceded Major-general Schuyler, his superior officer, in the command of the northern department; and on the 22d of May following, Major-general Schuyler, without any professed motive, was restored to that department. These caprices were unworthy the national councils, and injurious to the public interests: in military affairs this versatility in command begets disgust and negligence, damps the zeal of the officer, and utterly subverts responsibility; and it is in general the offspring of personal animosity or the intrigues of sinister ambition, of which the administration of President Madison furnishes abundant proofs.

General Schuyler resumes the command.

General Schuyler reached Albany the 3d of June, and addressed General Gates the next day for information respecting the state of the department, to which letter he received no answer, but Gen. Gates waited on him, and presented a letter from the commanding officer at Ticonderoga, and a return of the troops. On the 5th Gen. Schuyler ordered Gen. St. Clair to repair to Ticonderoga, and take the command, who accordingly reached that post on the 12th, where he found a small garrison, badly armed, worse clad, and without magazines. It is a fact, that both Major-general Schuyler and Major-general Gates, had demanded 10,000 continental troops for the defence of Ticonderoga; but unfortunately the Congress had received information, in the course of the spring, 1777, which they credited, that a large portion of the army of

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Canada had been ordered round to New York, to co-operate with Sir William Howe, and that no serious operation would be carried against the northern frontier. Under these impressions, the troops intended for the defence of Ticonderoga, had been detained on the sea coast, and the whole northern department was improvidently neglected.

General St. Clair's difficulties examined.

Among the manifold difficulties* which encompassed General St. Clair, two of the most important were found insuperable. The enemy from his command of the lake, and by the hords of Indians with whom he covered his front, rendered it impossible to ascertain his force and penetrate his designs; and, at the same time, the condition of his magazine of provisions, forbid his calling for auxiliary force in any extremity, because the remedy would have been worse than the disease; as without it we could but be beaten, and with it we must have starved.

When General Gates discovered from his friends in Congress, that it was probable he would be superceded in command by General Schuyler, he by the express au-

* Extract of a letter from Major-general St. Clair to his excellency John Hancock, president of Congress:

"*Ticonderoga, June 25th*, 1777.

"I inclose you a return of our troops at this post, by which you will perceive our effective numbers are little more than 2000, a force greatly inadequate to its defence; which should the enemy attack it in force, would require at least four times that number: in that two thousand are included a number of artificers who are unarmed, and many of the soldiers are in the same condition, and the whole in very great want of clothing, accoutrements and bayonets.

"If the militia were called in, they might possibly enable us to keep possession, but I have not yet ventured on that step on account of our low state of provisions, there not being more than 35 days meat for the troops now here, and because of the uncertainty in which we were with regard to the enemy's designs.

"No army was ever in a more critical situation than we now are; and supposing that this motion is only a feint to favour the operations of Sir William Howe, which I still suspect it to be, we may and probably will be reduced to the greatest distress, the supplies being derived from such a distance, and the communication so difficult, that it is next to impossible to support it."

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thority of Congress, issued the following order, which placed me at the head of the adjutant general's department in the northern army.

GENERAL ORDERS.

"*Head Quarters, May 24th,* 1777.

"Colonel James Wilkinson is appointed deputy adjutant-general to the army in the northern department of America; all orders written or verbal, coming from him, are to be considered as the orders of the general in chief of that department, and as such are to be punctually and immediately obeyed; and to this order all brigade majors, adjutants and others, are to pay strict attention and due obedience."

"HORATIO GATES, *Major Gen.*"

I had no suspicion when I received this order, that the command of the department was about to be changed, nor had I any expectation of receiving this appointment. My breast was warmed at that early day with the same personal affections, and zeal for the interests of my country which still animate it, and the following letter written at the time, will speak for the candour of these declarations.

"*Ticonderoga, May 31st,* 1777.

"My dear General,

"Permit me to make you my most grateful acknowledgments for the compliment you have paid me by an appointment little expected, and I fear less merited. The duties of the department, master my slender experience, and I dread, unless I am honoured with your directions, that your election will not escape the censures of the malignant and envious; but as I am *determined never to disgrace my commission, the conviction of my incapacity to attain a knowledge of the duty shall, with your permission, immediately reduce me to my late most agreeable situation.* I must beg pardon for the incoherent scroll which you

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last received from me; it was the hurried dictate of a breast torn by conflicting passions.

"Ten pieces of ordnance have arrived, which will be mounted, Major Stephens tells me, in five days; the rest are hourly expected: I shall pay strict attention to the preparation of the carriages. The works are now pushed on B——'s unmeaning plan.—For God's sake, let Kosciusko come back as soon as possible, with proper authority. The commissary's department has been as much neglected as the quarter-master's, for we could not subsist the present small garrison longer than ten weeks; in this situation what would be the consequence of the enemy's cutting off the communications by Lake George and Skeensborough?—I think, the reduction of the garrison without discharging a gun. Being more apprehensive of this move than their attacking the lines, I have urged the necessity of obstructing their passage into the South bay, and Colonel Hay has undertaken the business by sinking piers, which he says he will be able to complete in three weeks.

"Whitcomb returned from Split Rock last night, and confutes the intelligence transmitted you by General ——; he says there is only one schooner in that quarter of the lake, and she lies at Otter creek.

"It was contrary to my opinion, that General —— wrote to you in the manner and at the time he did; but he complained that the letter was not sufficiently alarming, and General —— was of opinion that we had not time to write.—Such irresolution I never saw displayed.—What can I do in this situation? General P—— has written to New England in a most lamentable style, and is now reduced to the necessity of sending expresses, to contradict his late positive assurances. You know the consequence of false alarms, and how this conduct will affect the officer's reputation; however, he did not blindly err, as I boldly represented to him the risk and consequences of the measure, and begged hard that it might not be executed. Major Stephens has used all the large iron sent by Colonel Lewis, and begs more. Pray take

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into your consideration the fleet; it is now totally useless. The officer who let the spy escape from the block-house, has been *honourably acquitted by a general court martial.* But I will not multiply your sufferings by my future complaints.

"I am with the utmost respect,
"My dear General's obliged,
"Obedient and ready servant,
"JA. WILKINSON.

"*Major-general Gates.*"

But on the 10th of June I received a letter from General Gates, in which he announced his removal from the command, and inclosed my commission, which bore date the 6th of June, and was signed by President Hancock. I regret that I am not able to place my hands on that letter, which abounded with assurances of friendship and was highly gratifying to me. Fired with indignation at the degradation of my favourite general and friend, I immediately took my pen and answered in the following language.

"*Ticonderoga, June 10th,* 1777.

Colonel Wilkinson's letter of June 10th, to General Gates.

"My dear General,

"I am this day honoured by your affectionate letter of the 7th instant, with the inclosed commission. It wrung my heart, and I dropped a tear upon it.

"I really begin to love the New England men, not from a display of any virtue or talent hitherto not exhibited, but for the mortification and dissatisfaction which marked their countenances on the late astonishing revolution. This just tribute was an evidence of their judgment and gratitude, which could but please a contemplative mind, zealously interested in your fate and fortunes.

"I anxiously expect General St. Clair; his presence will help to alleviate the load which oppresses me.

"The perfidy of mankind truly disgusts me with life, and if the happiness of an amiable woman was not unfortunately too dependent on my wretched existence, I

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should think I had lived long enough, nor would I wish more to breathe the common air with ingrates, assassins, and double-faced villains.

"It will contribute to my happiness to hear from you now and then.—You know my wish to attend you. With the liveliest sense of gratitude, I beg leave to subscribe myself my dear General's affectionate friend, and obliged and ready servant,

"JA. WILKINSON.

"*Hon. Major-general Gates.*"

These effusions of affection, however impassioned, will not I trust derogate from the integrity of my heart, which would not have denied its feelings to save my life; nor have I learned at threescore, thank God, to barter the independence of a free citizen, for the dastardly discretion or timid circumspection, by which courtiers acquire favour, and heartless sycophants explore the route to official eminence.

General Schuyler visits Ticonderoga, June 17.

On the 17th of June Major-general Schuyler visited Ticonderoga. He had not the preceding campaign commanded the troops in person, and making his head quarters at Albany, his intercourse with them was so circumscribed, that he was little known; and although a perfect gentleman, as he did not practise the arts of popularity, he was far from being a favourite. I was grateful for his marked attentions to me, but I did not feel for him the same regard I cherished for General Gates.

Explanation between General Schuyler and Colonel Wilkinson.

On the 18th the general officers made a critical inspection of the fortifications, and I was invited to accompany them. In the course of the walk, General Schuyler fell behind, and beckoned to me to attend him. As soon as we were alone, he said to me, "Young gentleman, I have a crow to pick with you." "Pray on what account, Sir?" "Do you recollect a letter you wrote a few days ago to General Gates?"—I was struck dumb with embarrassment, and he proceeded. "You have not treated me with great civility in that letter." Resentment had by this time removed my embarrassment, and

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I demanded, "How, Sir, did you come by my private letter?" "Very fairly: your letter, among many others addressed to General Gates, reached Albany after he had left that place, and not being marked private, I believed it to be official; but," continued he, "although you do not flatter me in that letter, I assure you I do not condemn you; on the contrary, I admire warmth and affection in young gentlemen of your age, and upon further acquaintance, I hope you may find cause to give me a share of the regard you now bear General Gates." I was charmed with the issue of an explanation which in the commencement had excited my indignation, and the liberality of the General could not fail of winning my attachment. In the course of his examination of the works, General Schuyler asked my opinion of the plan we should adopt, in respect to the maintenance of the post: I replied, that my age forbade an opinion in a case of such magnitude. "But I ask it, and I shall know how to estimate it," said he. I then recommended the course which may be observed in some of my letters, viz. that "the whole army, its magazines and attirail, excepting 1500 select men, with a few light iron cannon, and two month's provisions, should be ordered to Fort George, as by this plan we should be enabled to defend the place against a feint, and in case of a serious attack, our light party could scamper over the hills and join the main body." The General observed that this was precisely his own opinion, but that without orders from Congress, he dare not take on himself the responsibility of a measure which would excite a great outcry.

Colonel Wilkinson's opinion respecting the tenure of Ticonderoga.

We were still kept in ignorance of the movements and designs of the enemy; and a council of war was held on the 20th, which adopted the following conclusions.

Council of General Officers, held at Ticonderoga, on Friday the 20th of June, 1777.

Council of war.

Present—Major-general Schuyler, Major-general St. Clair, Brigadier-general Roche de Fermoy, Brigadier-general Poor, and Brigadier-general Patterson.

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General Schuyler requested the council to take into consideration the state of this post, with respect to the number of troops necessary for its defence, the disposition of the troops and mode of defence, the state of the fortifications, and the quantity of provision that may be depended upon.

The council having taken into their most serious consideration the several matters stated in the first article, are clearly and unanimously of opinion:

1st.—That the number of troops now at this post and Mount Independence, which are under 2,500 effective rank and file, are greatly inadequate to the defence of both posts.

2d.—That both posts ought, nevertheless, to be maintained as long as possible, consistent with the safety of the troops and stores.

3d.—That if it should become necessary to evacuate one or other of the posts, and that it remains in our election which, that it ought to be the Ticonderoga side.

4th.—That such cannon and stores as are not immediately necessary on the Ticonderoga side, be removed without delay to Mount Independence.

5th.—That the fortifications and lines on Mount Independence are very deficient; and that the repairing the old and adding new works, ought to claim immediate attention; and that the engineers be directed to repair and make the necessary fortifications.

6th.—That the obstructions in the lake, to prevent the enemy's naval force from getting into our rear, and thereby cutting off all supplies, or preventing a retreat, if such a measure should unhappily become indispensably necessary, ought to be completed with all imaginable despatch.

7th.—That so much remains to be done effectually to complete the obstructions, that, with the few troops we have, there is no great probability it can be done in less than six weeks.

8th.—That although our forces may be adequate to maintain our ground on Mount Independence, yet unless

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a sufficient stock of provision can be thrown in before the arrival of the enemy, we having now only thirty nine day's provisions of meat kind, we think it would be imprudent to expose the army to be made prisoners by the enemy; and that, therefore, it is prudent to provide for a retreat; to effectuate which, that all the batteaux now at this post be immediately repaired, and as many as can be spared out of Lake George be brought hither.

9th.—That a quantity of provision of the meat kind, should, if possible, be immediately forwarded from Albany or elsewhere.

10th.—That immediate application be made to his excellency General Washington, for a reinforcement to be sent on with all possible expedition.

(Signed) PHILIP SCHUYLER,
ARTHUR ST. CLAIR,
ROCHE DE FERMOY,
ENOCH POOR,
JOHN PATTERSON.

The temporising indecision and vain projects of the council, and the complication and remoteness of the contingencies on which they placed their reliance, discredited such men as Generals Schuyler and St. Clair; but the secret was that they were governed more by respect for public opinion than their own understanding. It was a desperate game played for popular applause, without a trump in hand, and of course could not succeed; and the losers were left without the consoling reflection that they had exercised their best judgment. This determination of the council being taken, Major-general Schuyler left Ticonderoga, and recrossed Lake George to hurry forward troops and provisions for the defence of the place; and my own feelings and opinions at that crisis of our situation, are faithfully pourtrayed in the following letter written at the time.

June 22. General Schuyler retires from Ticonderoga.

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"*Ticonderoga, H. Q. June 25th*, 1777.

"My dear General,

"I have not as yet, nor shall I in future omit one opportunity of communicating to you every material occurrence in our department; if my letters therefore should not reach you, do not accuse me of negligence or ingratitude, but ascribe this circumstance to that insatiable gulf, which has ever swallowed up all intelligence either to or from this post.

"The enemy by gradual movements, which have been duly transmitted to General Schuyler, last evening arrived at Crown point with some vessels and a party of their army, who have encamped on Chimney point. We are induced to believe from a morning gun, which was repeated down the lake, that their whole force is at hand, and as they have lately taken several prisoners, and the neighbouring inhabitants have had free access to this camp, I am persuaded they will obtain a true state of our weakness, which will indubitably precipitate their operations; in which case the post is inevitably lost; for if we risk a battle, the inferiority of our numbers (without a miracle, which *we sinners* have no right to expect) will subject us to defeat and captivity; and if we retire to Mount Independence, the scantiness of our provisions will subject us to reduction by famine, as the enemy, when in possession of this side of the lake, can easily remove the obstructions up the South bay, and by their fleet cut off our communication from Skeensborough. The militia are at our command, but should we call them in, immediate *starvation* is the consequence, as Gen. Schuyler has lately assured us that we have no right or reason to expect more than three hundred barrels of meat in addition, and we cannot subsist our present small garrison longer than seven weeks with what is on the ground. The distance from whence our supplies are derived, and the difficulty of transportation, both tend to embarrass us. In this cruel

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situation what can be done? The most laudable measu e in my opinion, would be to remove our heavy artillery and stores, with the convalescents and invalids of the army, to Fort George. Being then light and unincumbered, we might, if hard pushed, effect a retreat to that post, which would enable us to check the enemy's progress: on the contrary, should we attempt to support this place in our present deficient situation, we lose *all*, and leave the country defenceless and exposed.—What then will there be to obstruct their favourite scheme—a junction by the North river? Nothing that I can discern. You remember the state of arms I transmitted you on my first arrival here; I am sorry to inform you that they are not now better in quality, or superior in number. Our men are harassed to extreme weakness by fatigue, and the strong guards which we are now obliged to establish, will in a little time quite break up their spirits and constitutions. If fortitude, if enterprize, if perseverance or temerity could avail, I would not complain; but, in the name of Heaven, what can be expected from a naked, undisciplined, badly armed, unaccoutred body of men, when opposed to a vast superiority of British troops.

"What can be done, the great St. Clair will effect; but such is the weakness of our numbers, that he cannot form any plan of defence. Of the two, I prefer death to captivity; but be the event as it will, I shall not disgrace my acquaintance.

"O that you were here! the fertility of your soul might save this important pass.

"General Schuyler has been here for a few days, but is now in Albany.

"I am, my dear General,
"Your much obliged and affectionate serv't,
"JA. WILKINSON.

"*Major-general Gates.*"

Every stratagem and enterprize was employed by General St. Clair, to ascertain the force and objects of the

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enemy, but without effect; his movements were covered by his fleet, and his Indian scouts were spread throughout the wilderness which surrounded us. Our reconnoitring parties were either cut up and captured, or routed and driven in.

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CHAPTER V.

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The enemy appears before Ticonderoga.—Advances his right wing, and a skirmish takes place.—Coolness and caution of General St. Clair.—Effects of anxiety and hurry in action.—Reflections on the defence of works.—Stratagem by which information is obtained from a prisoner.—The Enemy shews himself on Mount Defiance, or Sugar hill.—Council of war.—Retreat of the army to Castletown.—Rear guard halts at Hubbartown, contrary to orders.—Pursuit of the enemy.—Affair of Hubbartown, July 7th.—Reflections thereon.—Loss of the British on that occasion.—General Burgoyne arrives at Skeensborough.—Captures the baggage of the army, and destroys the American flotilla.—Action between the 9th British regiment and Colonel Long's detachment.—General Reidesel detached towards Castletown and Pultney.—General Phillips returns to Ticonderoga.—Testimonials to the character of General St. Clair.—General Burgoyne's despatch to Lord George Germain.—Errors of engineers in the early settlement of America.—General St. Clair joins General Schuyler at Fort Edward.—Return of forces under General Schuyler.—Deficiency of ammunition, and means resorted to to supply it.—Deplorable condition of officers and men, want of clothing, &c.—General Burgoyne issues a proclamation, and General Schuyler a counter-proclamation.—The calumnies against Generals Schuyler and St. Clair noticed.—Deputy adjutant-general Wilkinson's vindication of General St. Clair.—Fortified camp, selected by chief engineer Kosciusko.—Audacious conduct of an Indian.—Sudden reduction of the continental and militia force by desertion.—Extracts from General Schuyler's letters.—Incursions of the Indians.—General Burgoyne's arrival at Fort Edward.—Gallant conduct of

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Major Clarkson.—Misconduct of the rear guard on the march to Stillwater.—Good conduct of Major Hull.—Colonel St. Leger's expedition noticed.—Captain Warren's skirmish with the Indians.—General Schuyler takes a position at the confluence of the Mohawk with the Hudson.—General Burgoyne's difficulties.—Expedition to Bennington.—Fatal consequences.—Schuyler and Stark's letters.—Colonel St. Leger invests Fort Schuyler.—General Herkimer's affair.—Its effects.—St. Leger's retreat. —His report to General Burgoyne.—Reflections on recent events.—Conclusions.—The force under General Gates would have rendered the same service under General Schuyler.—The convention of Saratoga ascribed to General St. Clair.—Cause of General Schuyler's want of popularity.—Party distinctions.—Reflections on the conduct of Congress.—Its intemperate resolutions.—General Washington declines naming a successor to General Schuyler.—Unanimous and honourable acquittal of General St. Clair.—Similar acquittal of General Schuyler. —Conduct of the then Congress compared with that of President Madison.—The practice of dismissing officers without trial reprobated.—Few instances of its being resorted to by General Washington or Mr. Jefferson.

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NOTWITHSTANDING this uncertainty respecting the intentions of Lieutenant-general Burgoyne, our preparations were not relaxed; the defences of the place were enlarged and improved by general fatigues, and the utmost industry of men and officers. On the 30th of June the enemy made his first appearance, and the advanced corps debarked at a point on the west side of the lake, three miles from Ticonderoga and in full view; while another detachment landed on the east side, directly opposite, and a party of Indians and Canadians thrown forward towards our lines, fell in with one of our scouting parties, and routed it. On the 1st July the whole army moved up the lake from Crown point; the British troops landing on the western, and the Germans on the eastern shore. On the 2d, the right wing, consisting of the Bri-

First appearance of the enemy before Ticonderoga.

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Advances his right wing, and a skirmish takes place.

tish line, moved forward and took possession of Mount Hope, and also of an eminence about one thousand yards in front of the old French lines, which had been repaired and improved, and constituted our advanced works. Captain Fraser and his marksmen, with several hundred Indians, preceded this movement of the enemy, and whether intoxicated or deceived by the ground (which being perfectly flat and covered with brushwood, concealed our lines of defence until close upon them) they charged a picket of sixty men, within two hundred yards of a battery of eight pieces, forced it to retire with considerable loss, killing a man as he entered a sally port, and advancing within sixty, eighty and an hundred yards of our works, scattered themselves along our front among the brushwood, and kept up a brisk fire. Suspecting from the weight of the enemy's column as it approached Mount Hope, that they intended an assault, and that this party had been sent forward to draw our fire and produce disorder, General St. Clair directed the troops to sit down on the banquet, with their backs to the parapet, as well to cover them from the shot of the enemy, as to prevent their throwing away their own fire; the officers in general marched on their ground in rear of the banquet, while Major Dunn, an aid-de-camp of the General, and myself, leaning on the parapet, kept an eye to the movements of the enemy, who continued to crawl upon us under cover of the brushwood: I at length observed a light infantry man who had crept within forty paces of the ditch, and was loading and firing from a stump, behind which he had knelt. I stepped to a salient angle of the line, and ordered a sergeant to rise and shoot him: the order was obeyed, and at the discharge of the musket, every man arose, mounted the banquet, and without command fired a volley; the artillery followed the example, as did many of the officers, from the colonels down to subalterns, and notwithstanding the exertions of the General, his aids and several other officers, three rounds were discharged before they could stop the firing; and when the smoke dispersed, the enemy were

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observed at three hundred yards distance, retreating helter skelter. Casting my eyes on the stump where I had perceived the infantry man whom I directed to be shot, I discovered him lying prostrate on his back, and mentioned the circumstance to General St. Clair, who though exceedingly heated by the conduct of the troops, which he reprehended in the strongest language, replied to me with that mild philanthropy which distinguished his character, "*Send out a corporal and a file of men, and let the poor fellow be brought in and buried.*"—But as the corporal approached the supposed dead man, he jumped up, clubbed his musket, and exclaimed, "By Jasus, I killed the man at the sally-port; a fair shot." The fellow was brought in; he belonged to the 47th light infantry, and was intoxicated and insolent, refusing to give a word of information.

Reflections on the defence of works.

Let the young officer attend to a fact which occurred on this occasion. Five hundred of the enemy were scattered along our front, the most distant not exceeding one hundred yards, when a thousand infantry and 8 pieces of artillery opened their fire upon them; and yet we could never learn that we killed a single man, or wounded more than a lieutenant!!! This was the effect of hurry, for I observed the infantry to fire at an elevation of twenty degrees, and the artillery without direction. From those causes, if the enemy had assaulted us at the time, he would have succeeded with trifling loss; and it is in this manner works are generally carried; for hurry renders a man blind and impotent, and therefore one cool soldier is worth three who are agitated. Assaults would seldom or never succeed, if the assailed could be brought to reserve their fire, until the assailants reach the counterscarp, and then to take deliberate aim; unless indeed resistance is overwhelmed by numbers, after the manner of the monster Suwarrow, at the barbarian and bloody scenes of Ismail.

At this late hour the General was unapprised of the strength of the enemy, or their actual designs; and this knowledge was of vital importance to his ultimate mea-

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sures. To acquire such information as the prisoner might possess, a Captain Johnson of the artillery (a son of Hibernia) was metamorphosed into a tory, and thrust into the guard room with him: he soon became acquainted with his countryman, and with the aid of a bottle of rum which Johnson had concealed among his tattered apparel, he before midnight procured from his companion, who happened to be an intelligent old soldier, the number and name of every corps under General Burgoyne, with an estimate of their strength, afterwards found to be pretty accurate. This information removed all doubts relative to the force of the enemy, and their movements indicated an "investissement." Still General St. Clair lacked resolution to give up the place, or in other words, to sacrifice his character to the public good: for by several manœuvres of his adversary on the 3d and 4th, he was cheered with the hope that General Burgoyne intended to hazard an assault, which he was determined to await at all events; but on the 5th the enemy, contrary to all expectation, shewed themselves on Mount Defiance, and fired at a vessel which lay in the strait. After reconnoitring his position attentively, the General turned to me, who happened to be alone with him, and observed, "We must away from this, for our situation has become a desperate one." A council of war was immediately convened, consisting of Major-general St. Clair, Brigadier-generals Roche de Fermoy, Poor and Patterson, and Colonel Long, who unanimously decided on an immediate evacuation,* which was effected during the night as well

The enemy shews himself on Sugar loaf hill.

Council of war.

* "At a council of general officers, held at Ticonderoga, July 5th, 1777, present Major-general St. Clair, Brigadier-generals Roche de Fermoy, Poor, Patterson, and Colonel commd't Long:

"General St. Clair represented to the council, that as there is every reason to believe that the batteries of the enemy are ready to open upon the Ticonderoga side, and that the camp is very much exposed to their fire, and to be enfiladed on all quarters; and as there is also reason to expect an attack upon Ticonderoga and Mount Independence at the same time, in which case neither would draw any support from the other; he desired their opinion, whether it would be most proper to remove the tents to the low ground where they would

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as the hurried preparation would permit, with troops the best of whom were but half formed; and but for the decision and activity of General Burgoyne, we should have escaped without the loss of men or baggage. But this unfortunate, gallant officer, who looked only to the honour of his profession and the interests of his sovereign, divided his force without a moment's pause, and pursued us in every direction of our retreat.

Our baggage, sick and convalescents, our ordnance, hospital and other stores, with a quantity of provisions, were despatched by the lake for Skeensborough, under the protection of Colonel Long and his regiment, and the main body of the troops retired by an unfinished road through the wilderness, twenty-four miles, to Hubbar-

be less exposed, and wait the attack at the Ticonderoga lines—or whether the whole of the troops should be drawn over to Mount Independence, the more effectually to provide for the defence of that post. At the same time the General begged leave to inform them, that the whole of our force consisted of 2,089 effectives rank and file; including 124 artificers unarmed, besides the corps of artillery, and about 900 militia, who have joined us, and cannot stay but a few days.

"The council were unanimously of opinion, that it is impossible with our force to defend Ticonderoga and Mount Independence, and that the troops, cannon and stores, should be removed this night, if possible, to Mount Independence.

"2d.—Whether, after the division of the army at Ticonderoga have retreated to Mount Independence, we shall be in a situation to defend that post; or in case it cannot be defended, if a retreat into the country will be practicable:

"The council are unanimously of opinion, that as the enemy have already nearly surrounded us, and there remains nothing more to invest us completely but their occupying the neck of land betwixt the lake and the East creek, which is not more than three quarters of a mile over, and possessing themselves of the narrows betwixt that and Skeensborough, and thereby cutting off all communication with the country, a retreat ought to be undertaken as soon as possible, and that we shall be very fortunate to effect it.

(Signed) "ARTHUR ST. CLAIR,
"ROCHE DE FERMOY,
"ENOCH POOR,
"JOHN PATTERSON,
"PIERSE LONG."

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town, where the front arrived about one o'clock; here we halted for the rear guard and stragglers, until five o'clock, at which time receiving advice of their approach, by Major Dearborn,* the General marched for Castletown, six miles further, which we reached at dusk. A party of the enemy had preceded us a few hours; a skirmish had ensued, and we found an aged citizen killed and scalped, and one of the British infantry mortally wounded. Colonel Warner, with his corps of about 150 men, was left at Hubbartown, with express orders from the General to join the rear guard, when it got up, and to advance within one and an half miles of Castletown, and there to take post for the night; but when Colonel Francis who commanded the rear guard joined Warner, they concluded to dispense with a positive order of the General, and to spend the night at Hubbartown.

Retreat of the army to Castletown.

Rear guard halts at Hubbartown, contrary to orders.

As soon as General Burgoyne discovered our retreat, he put his fleet and army in motion: Brigadier-general Fraser with his *elite*, supported by Major-general Reidesel and a German corps, was detached in pursuit of our main body, and the General in person pushed after our water craft with his armed vessels, having garrisoned Ticonderoga, with the 62d regiment, and the German regiment of Prince Frederick, and directed the rest of his army to follow him by corps, as fast as they could be put in motion, without regard to place in the line. The wind being favourable, he overtook our flotilla at Skeensborough in the afternoon, captured two of our armed vessels, and forced us to destroy the others with our batteaux, baggage, stores and provisions; and the detachment under Colonel Long then retired up Wood creek to Fort Ann. General Burgoyne took post at Skeensborough.

Brigadier-general Fraser, after a vigorous pursuit, encamped several miles in rear of Warner, but renewed his march early the next morning, and about 7 o'clock

* Since secretary of war and major-general, who belonged to the rear guard, and had been sent forward to the General to announce its situation.

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Affair of Hubbartown.

reached Hubbartown, just as Warner had paraded his men to follow General St. Clair, who was under arms waiting his arrival, when the firing commenced, which was confined to small arms, and the platoons were distinctly heard. Two militia regiments which were exceedingly insubordinate and seditious, had the preceding evening taken a diverging path, and encamped three or four miles in our rear. The first thought of the General was to support Warner by those corps, under the command of a Colonel Bellows; for which purpose his aids-de-camp, Majors Dunn,* and Livingston,† were hurried off with positive orders, and assurances of support; he then ordered the troops to be *told off*, and the officers posted for action, and he was exhorting them to courageous conduct, when I perceived a manifest repugnance in the corps to turn about and march upon the enemy; even one of the brigadiers was open in his opposition to the measure. In the mean time Majors Dunn and Livingston met the militia under Bellows, hurrying away from the scene of action to the main body, and finding them equally deaf to commands and intreaties, they pushed forward towards the field of battle, which they had nearly reached, when they met our troops flying from the enemy, and were informed by a Captain Chadwick, a gallant officer who had been engaged, that the conflict had terminated, which being warranted by the cessation of the fire, they returned to the General and made report.

Colonel Warner was a hardy valiant soldier, but uneducated and a stranger to military discipline; his insubordination at Hubbartown exemplifies the danger and misfortunes which attend the disobedience of military commands; for, if he had obeyed the orders he received, our corps would have been united, and, as the discipline of the enemy could have availed them little in a mountainous country covered with wood, we should

* Long since dead.

† The honourable Brockholst Livingston, now a judge of the supreme court of the United States.

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CHAP. V. infallibly have dismembered, and probably captured, the flower of the British army. Such an event would have recovered the drooping popularity of General St. Clair, and filled the country with clamorous exultation; but let it be considered with a view to subsequent consequences; would it have benefited the cause of the revolution? It may at first sight appear paradoxical, but I believe the occurrence to have been fortunate, because, had we been successful in that instance, the career of General Burgoyne would have been arrested, his operations would have been confined to the borders of the lakes for the campaign, and the whole British army saved from the convention of Saratoga! Vain, short-sighted and impious man! how often does he complain of the inscrutable ways of God, when the heart should overflow with gratitude for his mercy:

"For good he is, supremely good,
Nor less when he denies;
E'en crosses from his sovereign hand
Are blessings in disguise."

In the affair of Hubbartown, the courage of the combatants was conspicuous, and on both sides they bled freely;* that excellent officer, the earl of Balcarras, who led the British light infantry, and made his "*debut*" in arms on that day, afterwards informed me, that at the first fire which he received, twenty-one men of the leading platoon were knocked down, and himself shot through the arm; Major Grant, an officer of high reputation, who led the grenadiers, being at the same time killed. Warner and Francis endeavoured to atone for their fault by a manly and obstinate resistance, which they maintained for forty minutes; but our troops were under the necessity of yielding to numbers,† and finally gave up the ground:

* Our loss in this affair was never correctly ascertained, but it did not exceed 200 in killed, wounded and missing; that of the enemy was reported at 222.

† General Burgoyne makes the American force 2,000, and Brigadier-general Fraser's only 850; but he does not in this number in-

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Francis paid the penalty of his life, but Warner lived to participate in General Stark's triumph at Bennington.

General Burgoyne's anticipation of General St. Clair at Skeensborough, information of which he received at Castletown, obliged him to change his line of march, and by a circuitous route through Pawlet, Manchester and Bennington, he struck the Hudson river at Batten-kill, and joined General Schuyler at Fort Edward, on the 12th July. The night of the 7th being extremely dark and rainy, one of the guards took up and reported to head quarters a young man suspected of being a spy. I visited the guard, and found the prisoner to be a Lieutenant Lyon† of the militia, who had joined us to offer his services as a guide, of whom we stood in great need, being strangers to the country, which was in general a wilderness, a town having sometimes barely a cabin or two to to distinguish it; even Bennington, the seat of the government of the Hampshire grantees, could not number more than a dozen log cabins, which were however surrounded by a considerable tract of improved ground. Lieutenant Lyon, an active, ardent young man, was extremely zealous, and accompanied us as long as his services were useful: he had been stationed the preceding campaign, with a party of militia, at Otter creek, in a subordinate capacity; the post was evacuated without orders, and Lieutenant Lyon has been censured for that

Americans retire.

General St. Clair joins General Schuyler.

clude General Reidesel and the Germans which he led, amounting to 1500, of whom General Burgoyne says, "the Germans pressed for a share in the glory, and they arrived *in time to obtain it.*"—State of the Expedition from Canada, Appendix, p. xxxiii. The number of the Germans employed on this detachment was three battalions, (see the Memoirs of General Reidesel, published in the German language at Berlin in 1800,) whereas the force of the Americans consisted of Warner's regiment, which eight days before did not exceed 173 sick and well, and the rear guard under Francis, which were detailed at 310 on the evening of the 5th July; therefore, allowing every man to have been present, and adding thereto 117 stragglers, the whole number would not exceed 600, which was in fact more than we had on the ground.

† Since Mr. Matthew Lyon of Congress.

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transaction, although he opposed the measure, and on an investigation was acquitted of blame.

The corps which accompanied General Burgoyne to Skeensborough, were spread out to keep up and increase the panic produced by the loss of Ticonderoga; the 9th regiment, under Lieutenant-colonel Hill, was sent in pursuit of Colonel Long and his detachment, consisting of the invalids and convalescents, with his regiment, about 150 strong, making in the whole four or five hundred men. Colonel Long, finding himself pressed, advanced and met Lieutenant-colonel Hill, and an action ensued, in which the British officer claimed the victory; but it is a fact, that the 9th regiment had been beaten, and was retreating, and but for the entire failure of Colonel Long's ammunition, the Lieutenant-colonel must have been made prisoner, as well as Captain Montgomery of that regiment, who was wounded and left on the field, when, as General Burgoyne tells us, "Colonel Hill found it necessary *to change his position* in the heat of action;" but in truth, when his corps was obliged to retreat, and Colonel Long, for want of ammunition, could not pursue him.

Action between the 9th British regt. and Colonel Long's detachment.

A few days after these events, General Burgoyne recalled Fraser's corps and the 9th regiment to Skeensborough, where he established his head quarters, detached Reidesel with a German corps towards Castletown and Pultney, and sent back General Phillips to Ticonderoga to press forward his water and land transport, with his artillery, provisions and munitions of war of every species by way of Fort George: the troops under his own immediate orders, were occupied in clearing Wood creek, and repairing the road to St. Ann, and toward Fort Edward; where General Schuyler had taken post, and was making the most active exertions to collect and embody a force to resist the progress of the enemy.

Although the honourable, impartial and intelligent part of the world, have long since done justice to the military character and patriotism of General St. Clair, in relation to his conduct in the abandonment of Ticonderoga; I

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must be permitted to record a few testimonials to shew, that if he was at all culpable, it was for his temerity in attempting to hold the place as long as he did. The general return [A] of the 28th June, which, before his evacuation of the post, will shew that his continental troops fit for action were short of 3,000, and that the only reinforcement he received afterwards was 900 militia, on the 5th July, under no specific obligation for service, and it will appear from General Burgoyne's defence before the House of Commons, p. 17, that the force of the enemy was 7,200 troops of the line, independent of his Indians, irregulars and seamen, and it will also appear in these sheets, that the American troops were badly armed, miserably clothed, and short of provison; that they were necessarily divided between Ticonderoga and Mount Independence, which places were separated by Lake Champlain; and that his whole force was insufficient for the defence of either, ten thousand men having been demanded for that service by both General Schuyler and General Gates;* that on the night of the 4th July, the enemy had taken possession of Mount Defiance or the Sugar-loaf hill, which General St. Clair had not force to occupy, from whence both Mount Independence and Ticonderoga were effectually commanded, and that the enemy's batteries would have been opened upon him the next day, which last facts are sustained by General Burgoyne's despatch to Lord George Germain, dated Skeensborough, July 11, 1777, of which the following is an extract:

General Burgoyne's despatch.

"*July 5th.—Lieutenant Twiss, the commanding engineer, was ordered to reconnoitre Sugar hill, on the south side of the communication from Lake George into Lake Champlain, which had been possessed in the night by a party of infantry; it appeared at first to be a very advantageous post, and it is now known that the enemy had a council some time ago about the expediency of holding it: but the idea was rejected upon the supposition that it was impossi-*

* See their testimony on the trial of General St. Clair.

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ble for a corps to be established there in force. Lieutenant Twiss reported this hill to have the entire command of the works and buildings both of Ticonderoga and Mount Independence, at the distance of about 1400 *yards from the former and* 1500 *from the latter; that the ground might be levelled so as to receive cannon, and that the road to convey them, although difficult, might be made practicable in twenty-four hours: this hill also commanded in reverse the bridge of communication—saw the exact situation of the vessels, nor could the enemy during the day make any further movement or preparation without being discovered,* AND EVEN HAVING THEIR NUMBERS COUNTED."

Yet from the indolence natural to man, and his disposition to trust to appearances, this height had been previously neglected by the French, British, and American commanders; and a similar error took place at Fort Duquesne and Fort Pitt, both built on the same site, yet absolutely commanded on three sides; indeed such appears to have been the common error of the engineers in the early settlements of this continent, from Canada to Florida, from Michilimackinac to Natchez, and hence the principle, that a military commander should determine, never to trust to appearances or the judgment of any man, where it is practicable for him to examine and judge for himself.

I regret that the limits of these memoirs are too circumscribed, for the scrutiny of the numerous military operations which have fallen under my observation, and the exposition of the grounds and motives on which they have been condemned and vindicated. Pressed by circumstances, whatever may be my inclinations, the pages to which my work is necessarily confined, would not be sufficient for this purpose alone; but as I have rendered justice to the discernment and decision of General Burgoyne, I may hereafter indulge a few brief reflections on what I have considered his errors.

General St. Clair found General Schuyler at Fort Edward, in deplorable circumstances, but with a firm

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mind and unshaken spirits; he was actually deficient in the essential article of ammunition,* and lead was taken from the windows and shops of the inhabitants of Albany;† our powder lay at Fort George, but this the enemy permitted us to remove, together with our artillery, provisions and munitions of war; General Schuyler's whole force, before he was joined by General St. Clair, consisted of about six hundred continental troops, and a smaller number of militia, and this five days after Gene-

* *A Return of Ordnance and Stores in the Laboratory, taken at Fort Edward, July 15th, 1777.*

Old Muskets out of repair.	Cartridge boxes	Boxes containing 3130 wt. of Musket ball.	Pounds of lead.	Flints.	Skeins of musket cartridge paper.	Reams of writing paper.	Reams of musket cartridge paper.	Reams of cannon paper.
40	9	31	276	3500	94	22	10	9

"Sir.—The above return is an exact one of the ordnance stores at this place. I have sent you per the bearer two reams of writing paper.

"I am, Sir, with respect,

"Your obedient humble servant,

(Signed) "JASP. MAUD. GIDLEY, *Conductor.*

"*To Colonel Wilkinson, D. A. G.*"

† *Extract of a letter to Colonel Lewis,* Deputy Q. M. General, Albany.*

"The citizens of Albany only can supply our immediate exigencies; recourse must therefore be had to the committee, begging their interposition to collect such lead as is in the city: the lead from windows and weights may perhaps afford a supply for the present. As soon as it is collected, Mr. Rensselaer will have it made into ball, and send it up without a moment's delay. Should a wagon be sent off with one box, as soon as it is ready it must be pushed off; also all the buck shot.

"By order of Major-general Schuyler.

"J. LANSING, Jun.† *Secretary.*"

* Since governor of the state of New York, and late Major-general in the army U. S.

† Since chancellor of the state of New York.

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ral Burgoyne had reached Skeensborough, within a day's forced march of him, with five thousand veteran troops fresh and flushed with success. But General St. Clair led to his assistance two thousand continental troops* of the best appointment; Brigadier-general Nixon joined him the same day with about six hundred effectives, and the militia, encouraged by these appearances and roused by the importunities of General Schuyler, turned out daily from the adjacent county of Albany, and on the 20th our returns [*B*] exhibited a respectable force; but we were wretchedly found in all things, as General Schuyler's letters† to General Washington, of the 10th and 14th

* The men were in a wretched condition from want of clothing, and the officers had lost every thing; the General had on all he had saved, and I was in a similar predicament.

† *Extract of letters from Major-general Schuyler to Gen. Washington.*

"*Fort Edward, July 10th*, 1777.

"I am this moment favoured with your excellency's letter of the 6th instant. You will before this have received my several letters, advising your excellency of the evacuation of Ticonderoga, and the distressed situation we are in. We are by no means now in a better; rather worse, as desertion is frequent. General Nixon's brigade is not yet come up, nor do I get a reinforcement of the militia. General St. Clair, from whom I heard for the first time about ten o'clock this morning (copy of his letter I enclose) is about fifty miles east of me; if he should go to Bennington, as I fear he will be obliged to do, he will be still farther off, and the more he gets into the inhabited part of the country the greater will the desertion from the army be, which is already much, very much diminished by numbers going off. I am very apprehensive General St. Clair will not join me with more than one thousand men. Gen. Nixon's corps, I am informed, is under that. Thus with less than three thousand continental troops, and not quite one thousand militia, I am to face a powerful enemy from the north, flushed with success; and pressed at the same time from the west by a body which, from repeated information (copies whereof I have not time to send), is respectable, and already at Oswego."

"*Fort Edward, July 14th*, 1777.

"Colonel Warner, with the remains of his regiment, I have ordered to remain on what are commonly called the New Hampshire grants, together with the militia from that part of this state; he has directions to drive off all the cattle and carriages, but whether he will be

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July set forth. We re-occupied Fort Ann on the 13th, and employed every exertion on the portage from Fort George, to remove the public property from that post; in the mean time, the general officers reconnoitred the neighbourhood of Fort Edward, for a strong defensive position, and exerted all their faculties to supply the wants of the troops and to reanimate the country.

General Burgoyne issues a proclamation, General Schuyler a counter-proclamation.

Lieutenant-general Burgoyne, on reaching Skeensborough, had issued a proclamation, summoning the inhabitants of the Hampshire grants (now Vermont) to meet Colonel Skeene at Castletown, for the purpose of making their submission. To counteract the effect of this summons, General Schuyler issued a counter-proclamation,* to which I refer the reader.

able to effect it is a doubt, *as I am informed a very great proportion of the inhabitants are taking protections from General Burgoyne, as most of those in this quarter are also willing to do.*

"Desertion prevails, and disease gains ground; nor is it to be wondered at, for we have neither tents, houses, barns, boards or any shelter except a little brush; every rain that falls, and we have it in great abundance almost every day, wets the men to the skin. We are besides in great want of every kind of necessaries, provision excepted. Camp kettles we have so few, that we cannot afford one to twenty men."

* "By Philip Schuyler, esq. Major-general in the army of the United States of America, and commander in chief of the northern department, to the inhabitants of Castletown, of Hubbartown, Rutland, Tinmouth, Paulett, Wells, Grenville, with the neighbouring districts bordering on White creek, Camden, Cambridge, &c.

"Whereas Lieutenant-general Burgoyne, commanding an army of British troops, did by a written paper by him subscribed, bearing date at Skeensborough house on the 10th day of July instant, require you to send from your several townships deputations consisting of ten persons or more from each township, to meet Colonel Skeene at Castletown, on Wednesday, July 15, at 10 in the morning, for sundry purposes in said paper mentioned, and that you were not to fail in paying obedience thereto, under pain of military execution:—

"Whatever, my countrymen, may be the ostensible reasons for such a meeting, it is evidently intended by the enemy then to prevail on you, by threats and promises, to forsake the cause of your injured country; to assist them in forcing slavery on the United States of

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But whilst these patriotic, honourable men* were thus deliberating and acting for the safety of the country, the malignant passions of the human heart were put in motion, to depreciate their worth, to impair their influence, and destroy their utility. These perverse, uncharitable

America; and, under the specious pretext of affording you protection, to bring on you that misery, which their promises of protection drew on the deluded inhabitants of New Jersey who were weak enough to confide in them, but who soon experienced their fallacy, by being treated, indiscriminately with those virtuous citizens who came forth in defence of their country, with the most wanton barbarity, and such as hath not hitherto disgraced barbarians. They cruelly butchered, without distinction of age or sex; ravished children from ten to women of eighty years of age; they burnt, pillaged and destroyed whatever came into their power, nor did those edifices dedicated to the worship of Almighty God, escape their sacrilegious fury. Such were the deeds, such they were incontestibly proved to be, which have marked the British arms with the most indelible stains.—But they having, by the blessing of Divine Providence on our arms, been obliged totally to abandon that state, they left those that were weak or wicked enough to take protection under them, to bemoan their credulity, and to cast themselves on the mercy of their injured countrymen. Such will be your fate, if you lend a willing ear to their promises, which I trust none of you will do; but lest any of you should so far forget the duty you owe to your country as to join with, or in any manner of way assist or give comfort to, or hold correspondence with, or take protection from the enemy—be it known to each and every of you the inhabitants of said townships, or any other the inhabitants of the United States, that you will be considered and dealt with as traitors to said states, and that the laws thereof will be put in execution against any person so offending with the utmost rigour. And I do hereby strictly enjoin and command all officers, civil and military, to apprehend or cause to be apprehended, all such offenders: and I do further strictly enjoin and command such of the militia of said townships, as have not yet marched, to do so without delay, to join the army under my command, or some detachment thereof.

"Given under my hand at head quarters, Fort Edward, July 13th, 1777.

"PHILIP SCHUYLER.

"By the General's command,

"J. B. LIVINGSTON, *Aid-de-camp.*"

* The following testimonial of candour and magnanimity, may appear romantic in these selfish days; yet being no fiction, it is offered

dispositions of the human breast originate with the *Devil*, and under the impulses of avarice and a passion for CHAP. V.

to the meditation of those, who having founded rank on intrigue, falsehood and perfidy, are now ready to assassinate for pre-eminence.

"Sir, "*Moses's Creek, July 25th*, 1777.

"General Schuyler was good enough to read to me part of a letter he received last night from you. I cannot recollect that any of my officers ever asked my reasons for leaving Ticonderoga; but as I have found the measure much decried, I have often expressed myself in this manner: "That as to myself I was perfectly easy; I was conscious of the uprightness and propriety of my conduct, and despised the vague censure of an uninformed populace;" but had no allusion to an order from General Schuyler for my justification because no such order existed.

"The calumny thrown on General Schuyler, on account of that matter, has given me great uneasiness. I assure you, Sir, there never was any thing more cruel and unjust; for he knew nothing of the matter until it was over, more than you did at Kingston. It was done in consequence of a consultation with the other general officers, without the possibility of General Schuyler's concurrence; and had the opinion of that council been contrary to what it was, it would nevertheless have taken place, because I knew it to be impossible to defend the post with our numbers.

"In my letter to Congress from Fort Edward, in which I gave them an account of the retreat, is this paragraph:—'It was my original design to retreat to this place, that I might be betwixt General Burgoyne and the inhabitants, and that the militia might have something in this quarter to collect to. It is now effected, and the militia are coming in, so that I have the most sanguine hopes that the progress of the enemy will be checked, and I may have the satisfaction to experience that *although I have lost a post I have eventually saved a state.*'

"Whether my conjecture is right or not, is uncertain, but had our army been made prisoners, which it certainly would have been, the state of New York would have been much more exposed at present.

"I proposed to General Schuyler, on my arrival at Fort Edward, to have sent a note to the printer, to assure the people, he had no part in abandoning what they considered their strong holds; he thought it was not so proper at that time, but it is no more than what I owe to truth and to him to declare, that he was totally unacquainted with the matter; and I should be very glad that this letter or any part of it you may think proper to communicate, may convince the unbelieving. Simple unbelief is easily and soon convinced, but when malice or envy occasions it, it is needless to attempt conviction.

"I am, Sir,

"Your very humble and ob't serv't.

"ARTHUR ST. CLAIR.

"*The Hon. John Jay, Kingston.*"

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CHAP. V.

office, appear to be gaining ground in the American community; they spring out of partial interests, envy, and invidious feelings, and are cherished by intrigue and ambition; to repress them, they must be rendered not only unfashionable, but abhorrent to all minds and hearts, and to effect these purposes, under the government of these states, we must appeal to the source of all good and all evil in politics—THE PEOPLE. Let them elect for their executive magistrates, men unbiassed by party prejudice or factious influence, above sordid interests and sinister ambition, with public good for their object and public virtue for their guide: and under such auspices the American community may be restored to its ancient sympathy, integrity, good will, and good humour.

The calumnies daily invented and industriously circulated against Generals Schuyler and St. Clair, exceeded all precedent, and stood unrivalled until the flood-gates of slander were opened against myself: it was proclaimed that they were traitors to the country, and acted in concert with the enemy, and the ignorant and the credulous were led to believe that they had received an immense treasure "not in *Mexican gold packed on mules,*" but in *silver balls*, fired by Burgoyne into St. Clair's camp, and by his order picked up and transmitted to Schuyler at Fort George!!! Extravagant as was this tale, it was implicitly *believed*, and several persons questioned me with much gravity as to the fact! But those gentlemen, supported by conscious rectitude, looked down with pity on the delusions of their countrymen, invited an investigation of their conduct, and persevered in the faithful discharge of their duty.

The relation in which I stood to General St. Clair, a conviction of the injuries heaped on him, and a natural inclination to share the misfortunes of those I love, determined me to address the following letter to a Boston editor, I believe Edes or Gill, with the intention of checking the current of slander, or to divert a portion of it to myself; the motives and the sentiment of this appeal

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gave it popularity—it was reprinted in the Pennsylvania Packet, and produced the desired effect.* CHAP. V.

" *Moses's Creek, H. Q. July 28th*, 1777.

" Sir,

" It is with astonishment and concern, that I observe in your last papers, a vein of prejudice against General St. Clair, incurred by his retreating from Ticonderoga, equally impolitic, ungenerous and inhuman; for it is certainly impolitic to depreciate the influence of an officer high in command—it is truly ungenerous to put the worst construction on every incident attending the retreat—and it is inhuman to murder a man's reputation without giving him an opportunity of vindication.

" If General St. Clair has transgressed, he will surely answer for it at a proper tribunal. Do not then prejudge him, or disgrace your paper with the malicious inuendoes of every envious talkative puppy. Be charitable enough to suspend your opinion for a little time, and a scrutiny of his conduct, which General St. Clair has already claimed, will satisfy you and the public.

" Your correspondent from Manchester (it pains me to expose an officer) furnishes you with a gross misrepresentation; for be assured that I myself ordered his regiment to strike their tents one full hour before a man moved from Ticonderoga, though it is equally true, I could not find the Colonel. I suppose instead of attending the embarkation of the stores, he was "*packing up*." I am obliged too to invalidate the authority of your gentleman of capacity and character, who " had the first opportunity of knowing there were upwards of four thousand effectives in the garrison," since the returns of the army are made to me, and I declare to God and the world that there were, exclusive of about seven or eight hundred militia who had just arrived, only two thousand and eighty-four men for duty, " believe it who will."

" You observe that " the greatest number of the enemy, allowing the accounts of those whose business it is to make it as large as appearances would allow, could not exceed 6000; it was in all probability short of that number."—The malice of this suggestion time will evince. I wish we may not find the enemy one thousand stronger.—The fifty malicious questions which follow this observation, are too pitiful to be answered.

" I join with you in thinking there ought to be an inquiry after the arms and clothes you mention; for they really never reached Ticonderoga: though your interrogations on that head are improperly directed and maliciously pointed.

" Believe me, Sir, if virtue or justice has existence, the man who stands condemned for retreating from Ticonderoga, will ere long be thanked for the salvation of three thousand men, who, instead of being in captivity, are now opposing our enemy.

" I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

" JA. WILKINSON, *Dep. Adit. Gen.*"

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CHAP. V.

Fortified camp selected by Kosciusko.

The ill-fated Thaddeus Kosciusko was at that time our chief engineer, and for months had been the companion of my blanket: he selected a position for a fortified camp about four miles below Fort Edward, at Moses's creek, where the waters of the Hudson river are separated by an island. On the 22d we called in our outposts, and retired to that position, where it was proposed to await the approach of the enemy. During this day's march an Indian shot and scalped an inhabitant, who was removing his family out of the way of the enemy, between the left flank guard and the column: he was seen and pursued, but made his escape, and the audacity of the act produced a general sensation: the troops were now organised into divisions, and occupied the opposite sides of the river, the right under Major-general St. Clair, the left under Major-general Arnold, who had recently joined us; and ground was broken on the island for a battery to command the pass: the position had been selected because the approximation of the hills to the river, formed a defile susceptible of defence against a superior force.

But about this time the slanders to which I have alluded, and which were unfortunately patronized by factious men, who had even then found their way into Congress, produced a very general defection among the troops; a frightful desertion ensued, and on the 24th in the short space of five days, our continental force was reduced to less than 3000, and our militia to about 1300 men, and these subject to no effectual restraint; of the former, the greatest part were badly armed, and both men and officers half naked, sickly, and destitute of comforts. In this state of things, the hostile Indians were let loose by the British commander, and penetrated the frontier settlements, committing murders and spreading terror over the country. Our troops, who were all levies of the preceding winter, instead of recovering confidence, lost spirit; and the panic became more general and impressive than ever. General Schuyler's correspondence at this period, will best explain the difficulties by which he was surrounded, and the patriot zeal and

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manly resolution with which he met them.* We appeared to be approaching another crisis, but there was nothing

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* *Extract of a letter from General Schuyler to the Council of Safety of New York, dated Fort Edward, July 21st, 1777.*

"The inhabitants of Tryon county, as you will have perceived by copies of some letters which I have had the honour to transmit you, are already too much inclined to lay down their arms, and *take what terms the enemy may please to afford them.* Half of the militia of this county, and the neighbouring state of Massachusetts, we have been under the necessity of dismissing, lest the whole should go; and I believe what we here left will only remain a few days. The continental troops I have in this quarter, are under three thousand, and the enemy increasing with tories, who daily join them in very considerable numbers."

From the Same to the Same—dated Moses's Creek, 4 miles below Fort Edward, July 24th, 1777.

"We have not now above thirteen hundred militia on the ground. I wish we had the most distant prospect to detain one-half of those above five or six days. Our continental force is between twenty-seven and twenty-eight hundred. With this small body we have to encounter a much more numerous body of the enemy, well-appointed, flushed with success, and daily increasing by the acquisition of the tories. Happy I should still be in some degree, if I could close the melancholy tale here; but every letter I receive from the county of Tryon advises me, that the inhabitants of it will lay down their arms unless I support them with continental troops. From what I have said, you will see the impossibility of my complying with their request. The district of Scohary has also pointedly intimated, that unless continental troops are sent them, they will also submit to the enemy."

Extract of a letter from the Same to his excellency General Washington—dated Saratoga, July 28th, 1777.

"I believe your excellency *has spared me all the troops you prudently could;* but we are still too weak in this quarter, especially as sickness decreases us with great rapidity. Our men living entirely upon fresh meat occasions much disease. Salt meat we have none of, nor is any to be got in this quarter; if it can be spared from any post below I wish a quantity of it may be ordered up."

Extract of a letter from the Same to Major-general Heath—dated Saratoga, July 28th, 1777.

"Every effort of the enemy would be in vain, if our exertions equalled our abilities, if our virtue was not sinking under that infa-

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in the prospect to appal any person, who witnessed the scenes which had passed in the Jerseys, six and eight months before.

Under the circumstances of the moment, however, it was deemed expedient to retire from Moses's creek, because it would carry us nearer to our resources, and remove us beyond striking distance from the enemy. The camp was struck on the 30th, but previously to the march, 160 men had been detached from the left wing to destroy a bridge a mile or two in the rear. General

mous venality which pervades throughout, and threatens us with ruin. America cannot be subdued by a foreign force, but her own corruption may bring on the fatal catastrophe."

Extract of a letter from the Same to the Committee of Albany—dated Head Quarters, Moses's Creek, July 28th, 1777.

"I wish people to consider that we have had a larger body of the enemy on this side of Lake George, when Fort William Henry was taken;* that the British troops were on the point of retiring from Fort Edward; and that many concluded the country was lost. A little reflection convinced them, that the danger was not so great as they first imagined, and they resumed their spirits. I hope they will do so now. I wish them to consider, that if General Burgoyne should even get as far down as Half-moon, that he will run himself into the greatest danger, and that in all probability his whole army will be destroyed. It appears most evident to me, that if we exert ourselves all will go well. The troops under my command are in good spirits, and the militia also.

"Is it becoming rational beings, when a misfortune has happened to them, to despond and not to counteract the evil? Surely not; and if the militia would do their duty, we should soon make the enemy repent their ever having come into the country, and retreat with infinitely more loss than we have experienced; but if the militia will sit still, folding their arms, and not make use of those exertions which God has put in their power to make use of for their own defence, they certainly will become the victims of an enemy, whose very mercies are cruelty. How, Sir, can you think that I can spare men, when I have applied to you for men? Exert yourselves! shew that you are men, and you will find men in numbers, and your enemies will vanish."

* By General Montcalm, in 1757.

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Burgoyne reached Fort Edward the day before, and his Indians were on the alert; they attacked the detachment on its return, after destroying the bridge, and such was the consternation which seized on our men, that they retreated precipitately, suffering thirty or forty Indians to hang on their right flank, and to harass them up to the verge of their late camp, in the face of the division under arms. In this dastardly flight, the Indians threw away their fire at long shot, and wounded a few persons only, among them Major Matt. Clarkson,* aide-de-camp to General Arnold, who exposeed himself gallantly in attempting to rally the fugitives and bring them to action; a ball passed through the muscular integuments of his throat, it was believed the trachea was wounded, and I remember his youthful associates with sorrow anticipated his death, but contrary to expectation he soon recovered.

General Burgoyne arrives at Fort Edward.

The army reached Saratoga without other incident, than the loss of some stragglers by the Indians, and on the 2d of August continued its march to Stillwater. We had this day another evidence of the panic which prevailed among the troops. As the rear guard of one hundred men, was marching from its post to join the main body, it was fired upon by a small party of Indians, and took to flight in open ground: attracted by the firing I rode up, and was a spectator of the scene; the guard was commanded by Major Hull,† who on horseback was making the most animated exertions to rally his men, which he at length effected, and in turn drove the enemy with great gallantry.

General Schuyler reached Stillwater on the 3d, and began to intrench his camp on the 4th; but had made little progress, when he received advice of Colonel St. Leger's arrival before Fort Schuyler, by the way of Oswego. This expedition had been concerted in England, upon the general plan of the campaign, to effect a diver-

Expedition of Colonel St. Leger

* General Clarkson of New York.

† Since an unfortunate general.

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sion in favour of the principal operation, and eventually to form a junction with General Burgoyne at Albany. It consisted of 550 troops of the line, and Sir John Johnson's provincials, amounting to 800 men, with a numerous body of Indians.

He invests Fort Schuyler.

Colonel St. Leger invested Fort Schuyler, situate at the head of the Mohawk river, and 110 miles from Albany, on the 3d of August. The intelligence of his approach, received from Colonel Gansevoort who commanded the post, had roused the militia of the upper settlements of that river; and General Herkimer marched the same day, with about 800 men, to succour the garrison, having advised Colonel Gansevoort of his purpose, by a light party which eluded the vigilance of the enemy and reached the Fort. This body of citizens, headed by a chief unskilled in military affairs, was led on without the ordinary precautions of front or flank guards, and in the morning of the 6th, about five miles from the fort, fell into an ambuscade of Indians and royalists, under the direction of Sir John Johnson, who had been detached by St. Leger to meet them. A fierce and obstinate action ensued, in which the militia, although surprised, and fighting under manifest disadvantages, maintained their ground with great resolution. Herkimer* was mortally wounded in the onset, yet refused to be carried off the field, and continued to animate his men; who, after a contest of two hours, when the enemy ceased their fire, and drew off from the field of battle,† retreated with such deliberation, as to carry off their wounded. During the period of the action, Colonel Gansevoort ordered a sortie of 250 men, under Lieutenant-colonel Willett, against the encampment of the enemy in his rear, which was executed with the conspicuous

Affair of General Herkimer.

* Herkimer an honest, plain, unlettered German, well merited the monument which was voted by Congress, in commemoration of his death.

† Captain Stephen Watts, of Sir John Johnson's corps, was left on the field of battle with a broken leg, where he was found a day or two after by the enemy.

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gallantry, displayed by this revolutionary veteran on various occasions during the war: he destroyed their camp equipage and provisions, and carried into the fort many utensils and much baggage of the enemy, without the loss of a man. General Herkimer died of his wounds a few days after the action, in which our loss of killed and wounded was estimated at one hundred and sixty. St. Leger does not in his report of the affair mention his loss of whites, but admits that thirty Indians were killed, and the same number wounded; among whom there were several of their favourite chiefs and confidential warriors.* Both sides, as is frequently the case, claimed the victory, but as there was no pursuit on either side, it was evidently a drawn action, which spread sorrow over an extensive American settlement, eventually blasted St. Leger's hopes, and raised the siege of Fort Schuyler without a second conflict; for the loss suffered by the Indians afflicted and disheartened them, and the circumstance of the British troops not having participated in the combat, filled them with disgust and jealousies, which produced a general defection.

General Arnold ordered to the relief of Fort Schuyler.

The news of this engagement reached General Schuyler the 7th, with an exaggerated account of our loss, and on the 11th he detached Brigadier-general Learned, with about 800 continental troops, to reinforce the militia. On

* *Extract of a letter from Colonel Butler to Sir Guy Carleton, dated Camp, Fort Stanwix, Aug. 15th, 1777.*

"Of the New Yorkers, Captain M'Donald was killed, Captain Watts dangerously wounded, and one subaltern; of the rangers, Captains Wilson and Hare killed, and one private wounded. The Indians suffered much, having 33 killed, and 29 wounded; the Senecas lost 17 men, among whom were several of their chief warriors, and had 16 wounded. During the whole action the Indians shewed the greatest zeal for his majesty's cause; and had they not been a little too precipitate, scarcely a rebel of the party had escaped. Most of the leading rebels are cut off in the action, so that any farther attempts from that quarter is not to be expected. Captain Watts of the Royal New Yorkers, whose many amiable qualities deserved a better fate, lay wounded in three places upon the field two days before he was found; however, it is thought he will recover."—*Parl. Reg. vol. 9. p. 227.*

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the 13th General Arnold, having volunteered his services, was "*ordered to proceed to the German Flatts to take the chief command, with instructions to call out the militia, and relieve Fort Schuyler, if practicable; otherwise to adopt such measures as would most effectually cover the settlements of the Mohawk.*"

Having made these arrangements, General Schuyler determined to form a camp at the confluence of the Mohawk with the Hudson's river, as a more convenient position for watching the operations of St. Leger, and from its proximity to his general hospital and depots at Albany, to save the expense of transport, and refresh his troops, who were suffering from disease; or finally, should events impose it on him, to resist the advance of General Burgoyne; but before he marched from Stillwater, an incident occurred which is worthy of record, because it will expose to the reader the abject humiliation of those troops, who were destined in a few weeks to conquer the very enemy, whose name had excited terror, and whose presence had struck them with dismay. Such is the fluctuation of the moral and physical energy—such the inconstancy to which the human character is liable, when the mind or body is diseased, or life is put at hazard.

Captain Warren's skirmish with the Indians.

A Captain Warren, with a light party on scout, being attacked by a superior number of Indians, he retired to a deserted cabin, and on attempting to force it, one of the warriors was killed, upon which the Indians retreated; Warren had also one man killed, whom he brought into camp, with the scalp of the Indian. This trifling skirmish produced the excitements of a victory, and was recognised in the following

GENERAL ORDER.

"*H. Q. Stillwater, Aug. 9th,* 1777.

"The General thanks Captain Warren and the good soldiers of his party, for the gallant resistance they yesterday made against a superior number of savages. As Captain Warren has convinced the army, that those bar-

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barians are neither invulnerable nor invincible, the General flatters himself that our parties will never again retreat from them, unless they find themselves manifestly outnumbered. Our brave fellow soldier who gloriously fell in this skirmish is to be buried this day with the honours of war."

We decamped from Stillwater on the 14th, and after several halts took post the 18th on Van Schaick's island, formed by the mouths of the Mohawk. General Gates arrived, and again superceded General Schuyler in command on the 19th, and at an interesting epoch of the campaign. The current of adversity had expended itself, and a flood of good fortune began to pour in upon the American arms; and when General Schuyler was confidently looking forward to a change of circumstances which might reward him for his zeal and assiduity by the repulse of the enemy, of which he never appeared to doubt. The long halt of General Burgoyne in the vicinity of Fort Edward, and the incessant exertions of General Schuyler, to rouse the dormant spirit of the country, began to dissipate the alarm which had appalled citizen and soldier, and from the extreme of despondency, to restore that self confidence, which was consummated by the affair of Bennington.

General Gates again supereceds General Schuyler.

The obstacles opposed to General Burgoyne's progress the moment he was obliged to abandon his water transport, increased at every step he advanced; by sitting down at Skeensborough more than twenty days, he had enabled General Schuyler to break up every road, and obstruct every approach to the Hudsons river. These happily conceived and actively prosecuted measures, subjected the British army to heavy fatigues and unavoidable delays, and on his arrival at Fort Edward, he found his operations shackled by a great deficiency of the land transport which had been contracted for in Canada. To obviate those difficulties, mount Reidesel's dragoons, test the affections of the country, and indulge

General Burgoyne's difficulties accounted for. July 9.

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the chimerical idea of alarming the eastern states, he was prevailed on to hazard an enterprize, which eventuated in the loss of one-sixth of his regular force, and was the precursor of the approaching catastrophe.

The motives which led General Burgoyne to this adventurous operation, are precisely defined in the following extract from his instructions to Lieutenant-colonel Baume, bearing date Fort Edward, Aug. 9th, 1777 :—

Extract from Colonel Baume's instructions.

"*The objects of your expedition are to try the affections of the country, to disconcert the councils of the enemy, to mount Reidesel's dragoons, to complete Peters's corps, and to obtain large supplies of cattle, horses and carriages.*" The delusions by which General Burgoyne was misled, may be traced to the excessive zeal, and consequent misrepresentations of Governor Skeene, and those who had abandoned the cause of their country to join the royal standard; who were themselves beguiled by personal interests and animosities, and their eagerness to manifest the sincerity of their devotion. A stranger to the topography of the country, its improvements, population, and the political disposition of the people, it was natural that the General should listen to those whom he conceived best qualified to smooth his path, and who found a momentary importance in fanning his hopes and ambition. Such illusions are common to the human mind, and the strongest understanding is not always exempt from their influence.

But General Burgoyne committed a great error, in his selection of a corps for this critical service, which was ignorant of the language, habits, and manners of the country—a fatal oversight; and the want of discernment, decision, and celerity of movement, essentials in which the Germans were deficient, augmented their embarrassments; besides the detachment of Baume was too inconsiderable to awe the country, and not qualified to resist the attack of half its numbers in a broken country, abounding with defiles, covered with wood, and peopled with a hardy, resolute race of men: but above all, the tour prescribed was too extensive, and the operations

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too dilatory; indeed the instructions of General Burgoyne to Lieutenant-colonel Baume betray extreme ignorance or presumption, and justified the conclusion which is exhibited in the following letters. CHAP. V.

" *Van Schaik's Island, Aug.* 18*th*, 1777.

" Sir,

" I have the honour to congratulate Congress on a signal victory obtained by General Stark, an account whereof is contained in the following letter from General Lincoln,* which I have this moment had the happiness to receive, together with General Burgoyne's instructions to Lieutenant-colonel Baume, copy whereof is inclosed. Schuyler and Stark's letters.

" I am in hopes that Congress will very soon have the satisfaction to hear, that General Arnold has raised the siege of Fort Schuyler. If that takes place, I believe it will be possible to engage two or three hundred Indians to join this army, and Congress may rest assured that my very best endeavours shall not be wanting to accomplish it.

" I am informed that General Gates arrived at Albany yesterday. Major Livingston, one of my aids, will have the honour to deliver you this despatch.

" I am, with every sentiment of respect,

" Your obedient servant,

" P. SCHUYLER.

" *Hon. John Hancock, Pres't of Congress.*"

" *Bennington, Aug.* 22*d*, 1777.

" Dear General,

" I received yours of the 19th instant, which gave me great pleasure. I beg to be excused for not answering it sooner, I have been so sick ever since, that I could not

* General Stark's account being more minute and characteristic, is entered in place of General Lincoln's.

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write, neither am I well as yet. But General Lincoln has written, and I joined with him in opinion on the subject of his letter. I shall now give your honour a short account of the action on the 16th instant. I was informed there was a party of Indians in Cambridge, on their march to this place: I sent Colonel Greg of my brigade to stop them with two hundred men: In the night I was informed by express, that there was a large body of the enemy on their march in the rear of the Indians: I rallied all my brigade and what militia was at this place, in order to stop their proceedings; I likewise sent to Manchester to Colonel Warner's regiment that was stationed there; also sent expresses for the militia to come in with all speed to our assistance, which was punctually obeyed: I then marched in company with Colonels Warner, Williams, Herrick and Brush, with all the men that were present. About five miles from this place, I met Colonel Greg on his retreat, and the enemy in close pursuit after him: I drew up my little army in order of battle; but when the enemy hove in sight, they halted on a very advantageous hill or piece of ground. I sent out small parties in their front, to skirmish with them, which scheme had a good effect; they killed and wounded thirty of the enemy without any loss on our side; but the ground that I was upon did not suit for a general action. I marched back about one mile and encamped, called a council, and it was agreed, that we should send two detachments in their rear, while the other attacked them in front; but the 15th it rained all day, therefore had to lay by, could do nothing but skirmish with them. On the 16th in the morning, was joined by Colonel Simmons with some militia from Berkshire county: I pursued my plan, detached Colonel Nicolls with 200 men to attack them in the rear; I also sent Colonel Herrick with 300 men in the rear of their right, both to join, and when joined, to attack their rear: I also sent Colonel Hubbard and Stickney with 200 men, in their right, and sent 100 men in their front, to draw away their attention that way; and about three o'clock we got all ready for the

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attack. Colonel Nicolls began the same, which was followed by all the rest. The remainder of my little army I pushed up in the front, and in a few minutes the action began in general; it lasted two hours, the hottest I ever saw in my life*—it represented one continued clap of thunder; however the enemy was obliged to give way, and leave their field pieces and all their baggage behind them: they were all environed within two breastworks with their artillery, but our martial courage proved too hard for them. I then gave orders to rally again, in order to secure the victory, but in a few minutes was informed, that there was a large reinforcement on their march within two miles. Lucky for us, that moment Colonel Warner's regiment came up fresh, who marched on and began the attack afresh. I pushed forward as many of the men as I could to their assistance: the battle continued obstinate on both sides till sunset; the enemy was obliged to retreat; we pursued them till dark; but had day lasted an hour longer, we should have taken the whole body of them. We recovered four pieces of brass cannon, some hundred stands of arms, and brass barrelled drums, several Hessian swords, about 700 prisoners, 207 dead on the spot; the number of wounded is as yet unknown; that part of the enemy that made their escape, marched all night, and we returned to our camp. Too much honour cannot be given to the brave officers and soldiers for gallant behaviour; they fought through the midst of fire and smoke, mounted two breastworks that were well fortified, and supported with cannon. I cannot particularise any officer, as they all behaved with the greatest spirit and bravery: Colonel Warner's superior skill in the action, was of extraordinary service to me; I would be glad he and his men could be recommended to Congress. As I promised in my order, that the soldiers should have all the plunder taken in the enemy's camp, would be glad your honour would send me

* He was a captain of rangers on the plains of Abraham, with General Wole.

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word, what the value of the cannon and other artillery stores above described may be. Our loss was inconsiderable; about forty wounded and thirty killed. I lost my horse, bridle and saddle in the action.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most devoted and most ob't humble serv't.

"JOHN STARK.

"*Major-general Gates, Albany.*"

St. Leger's expedition.

If we turn our eyes from those scenes of triumph in the east, to Fort Schuyler in the west, we shall find St. Leger crippled by Herkimer, obstinately resisted by the modest and excellent soldier Gansevoort, and alarmed by the approach of Arnold, hastily raising the siege, and retiring with the partial loss of his artillery, camp equipage and provisions. The most satisfactory account of this transaction which I can offer the reader, will be found in St. Leger's report to General Burgoyne, bearing date Oswego, Aug. 27th, 1777, an extract from which I beg leave to quote. "When by the unabating labour of officers and men, (the smallness of our numbers never admitting of a relief, or above three hours cessation for sleep or cooking) the batteries and redoubts were finished, and new cheeks and axle-trees made for the six pounders, those that were sent being reported rotten and unserviceable, it was found that our cannon had not the least effect upon the sod work of the fort, and that our royals had only the power of teasing, as a six-inch plank was a sufficient security for their powder magazine, which we learnt from the deserters. At this time, Lieutenant Glenie of the artillery, whom I had appointed to act as assistant engineer, proposed a conversion of the royals (if I may use the expression) into howitzers; the ingenuity and feasibility of this measure striking me very strongly, the business was set about immediately, and soon executed; when it was found that nothing prevented their operating with the desired effect, but the distance—their chambers being too small to hold a sufficiency of powder. There was nothing now to be done,

His report to General Burgoyne.

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but to approach the town by sap, to such a distance that the rampart might be brought within their portice; at the same time all materials were preparing to run a mine under their most formidable bastion.

"In the midst of these operations, intelligence was brought in by our scouts, of a second corps of one thousand men being on their march. The same zeal no longer animated the Indians; they complained of our thinness of troops, and their former losses. I immediately called a council of the chiefs; encouraged them as much as I could; promised to lead them on myself, and bring into the field three hundred of the best troops. They listened to this, and promised to follow me, and agreed that I should reconnoitre the ground properest for the field of battle the next morning, accompanied by some of their chief warriors, to settle the plan of operations.

"When upon the ground appointed for the field of battle, scouts came in with the account of the first number swelled to 2000; immediately after a third, that General Burgoyne's army was cut to pieces, and that Arnold was advancing, by rapid and forced marches, with three thousand men. It was at this moment I began to suspect cowardice in some, and treason in others; however, I returned to camp, not without hopes, with the assistance of my gallant coadjutor Sir John Johnson, and the influence of the superintending colonels, Claus and Butler, of inducing them to meet the enemy. A council, according to their custom, was called to know their resolutions, before the breaking up of which, I learned that two hundred were already decamped. In about an hour they insisted that I should retreat, or they would be obliged to abandon me.—I had no other part to take (and a hard part it was, to troops who could do nothing without them, to yield to their resolves); and therefore proposed to retire at night, sending on before my sick, wounded, artillery, &c. down the Wood creek, covering them by our line of march. This did not fall in with their views; which were no less than treacherously committing ravage upon their friends, as they had lost the

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opportunity of doing it upon their enemies. To effect this, they artfully caused messengers to come in, one after the other, with accounts of the nearer approaches of the rebels; one and the last affirmed, that they were within two miles of Captain Lernoult's post. Not giving entire credit to this, and keeping to my resolution of retiring by night, they grew furious and abandoned; seized upon the officers' liquor and clothes, in spite of the efforts of their servants; and became more formidable than the enemy we had to expect. I now thought it time to call in Captain Lernoult's post, retiring with the troops in camp to the ruined fort, called William, in the front of the garrison, not only to wait the enemy, if they thought proper to sally, but to protect the boats from the fury of the savages. Having sent forward Captain Hoyes with his detachment, with one piece of cannon, to the place where Bull Fort stood, to receive the troops who waited the arrival of Captain Lernoult, most of the boats were escorted that night beyond Canada creek, where no danger was to be apprehended from the enemy. The creek at this place, bending from the road, has a deep cedar swamp between: every attention was now turned to the mouth of the creek, which the enemy might have possessed themselves of by a rapid march by the Oneida castle. At this place the whole of the little army arrived by twelve o'clock at night, and took post in such a manner as to have no fears of any thing the enemy could do."

Reflections on recent events.

We have here some examples of the character of the Indian tribes. The effects of these signal events were more extensive than appeared at first view, and connected with all the circumstances which had ensued the evacuation of Ticonderoga, must warrant the following conclusions:—

1st.—That the army of Lieutenant-general Burgoyne had been essentially disabled; by the loss of a heavy detachment, with its artillery and baggage; and by the discomfiture of a collateral branch of the expedition he commanded.

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2d.—That the zeal, patriotism, perseverance, and salutary arrangements of General Schuyler, had roused the spirit of the country, and vanquished the prejudices excited against him by artifice, intrigue and detraction.

3d.—That by the repulse of St. Leger and the capture of the detachment under Colonel Baume; safety had been restored to the western frontier; and the panic terror which pervaded the community had subsided.

4th.—That these circumstances enabled General Schuyler, to concentrate and oppose his whole continental force to the main body of the enemy; and

5th.—That the friends of the revolution were reanimated and excited to a manly resistance, whilst the adherents of the royal cause were intimidated, and shrunk into silence and inactivity, anterior to the arrival of General Gates to take the command.

From these premises, which rest on incontrovertible facts, it may fairly be deduced, that the same force which enabled General Gates to subdue the British army, would have produced a similar effect under the orders of General Schuyler; since the operations of the campaign did not involve a single instance of professional skill, and the triumph of the American arms was accomplished by the physical force and valour of the troops, under the PROTECTION AND DIRECTION OF THE GOD OF BATTLES. For the justice of these remarks, I have no hesitation to appeal to his excellency Governor Brooks of Massachusetts, and to Henry Dearborn, esq. late major-general in the service of the United States, who shared the toils, perils and hardships of that memorable campaign.

But it is not my intention by these observations to derogate from the merits or services of General Gates, which were important and conspicuous; on the contrary, it is my opinion, that under a change of circumstances, the same causes which degraded General Schuyler, would have sunk General Gates under popular discontent and congressional anathemas; and in such case, all the consequences would have been reversed;

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but I shall ever believe, that St. Clair laid the foundation of our good fortune in the convention of Saratoga.

Cause of General Schuyler's want of popularity.

It has been remarked by the American historiographers, that Gen. Schuyler did not possess popularity in the New England states, but they profess their ignorance of the cause; yet, with due deference, I think it may be traced to certain jealousies which had subsisted between the colonies of New York and New England respecting territorial limits, anterior to the revolution, which had been strongly excited, about the period I am speaking of, by the pretensions of the Hampshire grantees, who had entered upon a tract of country claimed by the government of New York, and which was subsequently erected into the state of Vermont.* The rancour of civil feuds is increased by the approximation of the parties, and the line of demarcation being defined, individual exceptions cease. In this case, the controvertists were distinguished by the designation of Yankee and Yorker; somewhat may also be ascribed to social habits and manners; those of New England were, at that period, democratic and puritanical, whilst in New York they were courtly and aristocratic.

The national councils were no longer governed by the harmony of 1775; the pressure of common dangers had ceased to operate as a bond of union; local prejudices had crept into Congress, and that honourable body had split into parties. The fact is strongly illustrated by the following extract of a letter from that respectable character Colonel Joseph Trumbull, commissary general of the army, and son of the venerable governor of Connecticut: "*I have quitted the commissary department; the regulations which form the ground on which I have quitted, were formed by the junto. Is it known in your state (Mas-*

* It was General Gates's policy to favour the views of the inhabitants of the Hampshire grants, which made him popular with those people; and I have cause to believe that the name of the state was devised in his quarters at Ticonderoga in 1776, from the Latin designation of the country, virides montes.

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*sachusetts) that the president (Hancock) is with the Yorkers and southern bashaws; that if he wants any thing moved, his brother delegates are not applied to, but the motion comes from Duane, or some other person of no better character; and that there is no harmony between him and his brethren."**

Extraordinary proceedings of Congress.

The Congress must have been conscious, that Ticonderoga was lost by their own neglect, or the misapplication of the force intended for its defence; yet yielding to personal prejudice, and the popular outcry produced by the evacuation of that post, they passed the following intemperate resolutions, which rendered an emendatory resolution necessary, and but for the admonition of General Washington, would have stripped the northern army of general officers at a critical stage of the campaign.

In Congress, July 29th, 1777.

"Resolved, That an inquiry be made into the reasons of the evacuation of Ticonderoga and Mount Independence, and into the conduct of the general officers who were in the northern department at the time of the evacuation; that a committee be appointed to digest and report the mode of conducting the inquiry."

"*July* 30.—Resolved, That Major-general St. Clair, who commanded at Ticonderoga and Mount Independence, forthwith repair to head quarters."

"*Aug* 1.—Resolved, That Major-general Schuyler be directed to repair to head quarters.

"That General Washington be directed to order such general officer as he shall think proper, immediately to repair to the northern department, to relieve Major-general Schuyler in his command there; that Brigadier Poor, Brigadier Patterson, and Brigadier Roche de Fermoy, be directed to repair to head quarters."

"*Aug.* 3.—Resolved, That General Washington be directed to order the general whom he shall think proper to relieve General Schuyler in his command, to repair

* Gordon.

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with all possible expedition to the northern department, giving him directions what number of the militia to call from the states of New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

"That notice be immediately sent to the executive powers of the said states, and that they be earnestly requested to get the militia in those parts of their respective states most contiguous to the department, ready to march at a moment's warning; and to send with all possible expedition, such parts of them as the general commanding in the northern department shall require, to serve till the 15th November, if not sooner relieved by the continental troops, or dismissed by the commanding officer of the department, and entitled to the continental pay and rations.

"That the commanding officer in the northern department have discretionary power to make requisitions on the states aforesaid from time to time, for such additional numbers of the militia to serve in that department, as he shall judge necessary for the public service."

"Whereas it is represented to Congress, that General Washington is of opinion, that the immediate recal of all the brigadiers from the northern army may be productive of inconvenience to the public service—

"*Resolved*, That the order of Congress of the first day of this month, respecting the said brigadiers, be suspended, until General Washington shall judge it may be carried into effect with safety."

But General Washington, who knew where the fault lay, and reposed entire confidence in General Schuyler, declined ministering in the injustice offered to that officer, and excused himself from nominating his successor; whereupon, Congress, by special resolution, conferred the command upon Major-general Gates, and after holding Schuyler and St. Clair in cruel suspense for more than a year, they were permitted to appear before a general court martial, which passed the following sentences of acquittal.

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"*Quaker Hill, Sept. 29th*, 1778.

"The court having duly considered the charges against MAJOR-GENERAL ST. CLAIR, and the evidence, are unanimously of opinion, that he is NOT GUILTY of either of the charges preferred against him, and do unanimously acquit him of all and every of them with the HIGHEST HONOUR.

"B. LINCOLN, *Major Gen. & Pres't.*"

Honourable acquittal of General St. Clair and General Schuyler.

"*Quaker Hill, Oct. 3d*, 1778.

"The court having considered the charge against MAJOR-GENERAL SCHUYLER, the evidence and his defence, are unanimously of opinion he is not guilty of any neglect of duty, in not being at Ticonderoga, as charged, and the court do therefore acquit him WITH THE HIGHEST HONOUR.

"B. LINCOLN, *Major Gen. & Pres't.*"

Conduct of the then Congress compared with the conduct of President Madison.

This conduct of Congress towards two such respectable, able and faithful servants of the republic, was considered most unrighteous, and drew great and deserved odium on its authors.—But when compared with the cold hearted cruelty of President Madison, it must be considered the lenity of justice. The confidential *secret reporters* introduced by Mr. Madison into the American army, originated with TIBERIUS, and have been handed down to posterity, by the tyrants of Europe; but that the government of the United States should have legalised such an abominable system of espionage, is a circumstance of national degradation and reproach; that men clothed in the garb of honour, should be employed and paid to watch over and pry into the conduct of their brethren in arms, to scrutinise their infirmities, and keep records of ordinary conversations, for the secret information of a president of the United States, will scarcely be credited, but by those who have seen numbers struck from the rolls of the army, without charge or accusation, and in total ignorance of the cause of ther dishonour;

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or who have seen the mass of foul accusation preferred against me by President Madison and his advisers, with every alteration, revision and addition that human malice, official cunning, and legal chicane could invent, during a lapse of six months, and even up to the time I appeared a prisoner before the court.

This power to disgrace an American citizen, without hearing, is as repugnant to the genius of our government, as it is offensive to the ordinary maxims of moral justice: it was exercised but twice anterior to Mr. Madison's accession to the presidential chair; once by General Washington, and once by Mr. Jefferson, and if I have been correctly informed, with much reluctance in both cases, although for offences *notoriously infamous*.

For the safety of the constitution and the honour of the army, I hope the day is not distant, when a virtuous and enlightened legislative body may interpose its authority, to abolish this odious assumption of inquisitorial power, and annul the vile office of confidential reporters, or in other words of secret *familiars* or informers, the assassins of good fame.

At the period when the manners of the Romans were most pure, when honour and virtue formed the pillars of the republic, the Remmian law exacted, that a false accuser should have the letter K branded on his forehead, as a mark of infamy. When Eschines falsely accused Ctesiphon, he was condemned to pay five thousand drachmas; but in our republic, at this early day, such are the strides of corruption, that the innocent are condemned, and the accusers are either rewarded or suffered to escape with impunity—to preserve the HARMONY OF THE CABINET, and promote the interests of THE RULING PARTY. O tempora! O mores!

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CHAPTER VI.

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General Gates relieves General Schuyler in the command of the northern army.—Reflections on the treatment experienced by General Schuyler.—His letter to General Washington.—General Burgoyne's instructions and conduct considered.—Condition of the army under General Gates.—Advantages under which he resumed the command.—General order of August 20th, 1777.—Extraordinary powers vested in General Gates by Congress.—Extract of General Washington's letter to Governor Clinton.—General Washington to General Gates, and the answer.—Colonel Morgan and his rifle corps reach head quarters.—Doctor Wood arrives with a letter from General Burgoyne to General Gates, complaining of the treatment of wounded prisoners.—General Gates retorts, and calls General Burgoyne's attention to the case of Miss M'Crea.—Facts respecting her death.—Movement of the American army.—General Gates takes possession of Behmus's heights.—His ignorance of the position of the enemy.—Colonel Wilkinson detached on a reconnoissance.—Ascertains that General Burgoyne was advancing.—This fact confirmed by two British prisoners.—General Burgoyne's movement from Saratoga to Davocole, where he halts to reconnoitre and repair bridges.—Advances and encamps on the Hudson's river.—Description of his camp.—Also that of General Gates.—Intervening ground described.—Further movements of the enemy.—Action commences.—The rifle corps drives the enemy's picket, and falls in with his line.—Colonel Wilkinson visits the field of battle, and meets Colonel Morgan.—General Gates orders out reinforcements.—Action becomes general.—Corps principally engaged.—The engagement accidental.—The scene of action described.—Loss on the part of the British artillery.—General Burgoyne's account of the action.—No general officer present in the field of battle till the evening.—Action sustained by individual courage rather

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than military skill.—Death of Ensign Phillips, a wounded prisoner.—Reflections on that event.—Return of killed and wounded.—Loss of the enemy.—Colonel Brown's successful enterprize against the enemy near Ticonderoga.—Conduct of the militia under General Stark.—Arrival of a British deserter.—Information obtained from him.—Expected attack.—The deserter's information discredited, but afterwards proved to be correct.—Anecdote related to General Wilkinson by General Phillips.—General Burgoyne's correspondence with Sir Henry Clinton.—Extraordinary combination of circumstances favourable to the American arms.—Beneficial effects of the action of the 19th Sept.—Difference between General Gates and General Arnold.—General order of the 22d Sept. the immediate cause of it.—Correspondence between them.—Arnold's subsequent conduct.—General Lincoln's arrival, and appointment to the command of the right wing.

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General Gates relieves General Schuyler.

MAJOR-GENERAL Gates relieved Major-general Schuyler in the command of the northern department, on the evening of the 19th of August, precisely in season to profit by the reverse of fortune, which had radically affected the physical force of the adverse armies; and to engross all the eclat which attended the auspicious change. I loved Gates, but I loved justice better; and my heart bled for Schuyler, when he was obliged to resign the fruits of his labours, and sorrowfully laid down his command. He might truly have exclaimed "*sic vos non vobis!*" Little did I think at that day, that the hard fortune of this gentleman, would ever be measured out to myself; sad delusion! for my life has exhibited a succession of mortification and injuries: yet that Almighty Power which controuls my destiny, has been pleased to endow me with resignation and tranquillity. General Schuyler's sensibilities are strongly depicted in a letter to General Washington, written about the time of his removal from command. "It is," says he, "matter of extreme chagrin to me to be deprived of the command, at a time when soon, if ever, we shall probably be enabled

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to meet the enemy; when we are on the point of taking ground where they must attack to disadvantage, should our force be inadequate to facing them in the field; when an opportunity will in all probability occur, in which I might evince that I am not what Congress have too plainly insinuated, by the resolution taking the command from me."

General Burgoyne's instructions and conduct considered.

It is apparent, from General Burgoyne's correspondence with the English minister, and the evidence produced on his enquiry before the House of Commons, that if he had not considered his orders imperative, "to form a junction with Sir William Howe," he would have taken a safe position, within reach of his magazines at Fort George, and waited events; but the peremptory tenor of his orders took away his discretion: he therefore, unappalled by the misfortune of Baume, or the discomfiture of St. Leger, redoubled his activity and exertion to surmount the almost insuperable difficulties of deficient transport, and pursued his course with a decision and perseverance worthy a better cause, and a more fortunate issue. Indeed the conduct of Burgoyne on this occasion, marked the soldier regardless of personal motives, faithful to his profession, and solely intent on the execution of his instructions.

The army of General Gates, reanimated by success, by returning health and increasing numbers, was fostered by General Washington, and invigorated by the zealous co-operation of that intrepid soldier, distinguished statesman, revered patriot, and inflexible republican, General George Clinton,* who had been recently elected

* "*Kingston, Sept. 10th*, 1777.

"Sir,

"I am favoured with yours of yesterday, and shall not fail of exerting every nerve to give you all the aid from the militia of this state that can possibly be obtained. By my leter to you of the 15th instant, containing a copy of a letter which I received from General Putnam, you will observe that I have ordered out eleven regiments of this state, to reinforce his army, strengthen the posts in the highlands, and oppose the enemy who crossed the river into New Jersey.

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governor of the state of New York; and Congress *now* exerted every means within the compass of their power, to strengthen his ranks, and give effect to his authority. On the day after his arrival, General Gates issued the following

GENERAL ORDER.

"*H. Q. Van Schaick's Island, Aug. 20th*, 1777.

"The most honourable the Congress of the United States have been pleased to appoint Major-general Horatio Gates, to be commander in chief of the army in the

These are already marched for that purpose; all the other regiments of militia in this state, (Tryon county and the Scoharie regiment excepted) are ordered immediately to join your army, leaving only such small guards at home, as shall be necessary to secure the peace of the country against internal enemies.

"I am, Sir, with great regard,

"Your most obedient servant,

"GEO. CLINTON.

"*His Honour Major-general Gates.*"

"*Kingston, 15th Sept.* 1777.

"Dear Sir,

"About twelve o'clock this day I received the inclosed letter from General Putnam by express. In consequence of the intelligence therein contained, I have ordered eleven regiments of the militia of this state to march immediately, six of them to join General Putnam's army at Peek's kill, two to strengthen the garrison of Fort Montgomery, and three to join General M'Dougal at Ramapogh.—This is the whole of the militia, as far north on both sides of the river as Poughkeepsie inclusive. I did not choose to extend my orders to those further northward, as it would put it out of my power to afford you that succour which you have reason to expect in case of a misfortune in your quarter. I have as yet received no further accounts of the action to the southward, but what is contained in the inclosed; as soon as I do I will forward them to you: I would fain hope, that in its consequences that action will prove more favourable to us than at first view it might be expected. I inclose you this day's paper. A line from you when a leisure moment offers, will be at all times very agreeable—being with very great regard your most obedient servant,

"GEO. CLINTON.

"*The Hon. Major-general Gates.*"

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northern department. Major Robert Troup* and Major James Miles Hughes, are appointed aids-de-camp to General Gates, and are to be obeyed as such.

"The General wishes the conduct of all the officers under his command may be such as to render the exertion of the following resolution of Congress entirely unnecessary: he is sorry the northern army should, by the conduct of any individuals, be the occasion of such powers being put into his hands; the good officer will always find a patron in the General, the bad one must expect disgrace."

In Congress, Aug. 14th, 1777.

"*Resolved*, That the commanding officer in the northern department be empowered, for the term of four months from the date of this resolution, to suspend officers under his command for mal-conduct, and to appoint others in their room, till such time as the *pleasure of Congress can be known concerning the person or persons so suspended; and that he report to Congress with as much despatch as possible, the names of such as he may suspend, with the cause of their suspension.*"†

* Since Judge Troup of the state of New York.

† "*Philadelphia, Aug. 14th*, 1777.

"Sir,

"The inclosed resolve which I have the pleasure of transmitting, I hope will find you safely arrived at the head of the army in the department committed to your care.

"Want of discipline and other disorders, too apt to prevail in a retreating army, have induced Congress to pass a resolve, empowering you to remedy those evils as far as possible, and they have for this purpose authorised you *for the limited time of four months* to suspend any officers for misconduct; not doubting that before the expiration of that period, you will be able to introduce that order and subordination so necessary in a military line. You will be pleased to forward to Congress with as much despatch as possible, the names of those you may suspend with the reasons of their suspension.

"Your zeal and success in the American cause have hitherto been so distinguished, that it is impossible for me not to flatter myself with

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Extract of General Washington's letter to Governor Clinton.

On the 21st the General received a letter from Governor Clinton, dated at Albany the same day, in which he says, "I received a letter last night from his excellency General Washington, dated Cross Roads, 16th August, in which there is the following paragraph. 'I am forwarding as fast as possible, to join the northern army, Colonel Morgan's riflemen, amounting to about five hundred men. These are well chosen men, selected from the army at large, well acquainted with the use of rifles, and with that mode of fighting which is necessary to make them a good counterpoise to the Indians, and have distinguished themselves on a variety of occasions since the formation of the corps, in skirmishes with the enemy. I expect the most eminent services from them, and am mistaken if their presence does not go far towards producing a general desertion among the savages. I should think it would be well, even before their arrival, *to begin to circulate these ideas with proper embellishments throughout the country*, and in the army, and to take pains to communicate them to the enemy: it would not be amiss, among other things, *to magnify numbers.*'"

This letter furnishes strong testimony of General Washington's impartial attention to the interests of the service, and his regard to the general safety of the country; it also proves his deep sagacity and the soundness of his professional judgment; and the following correspondence will more fully explain the liberal views and parental vigilance of the commander in chief, and the patriot zeal and proper feeling by which General Gates was actuated at that time.

the expectation, that we shall ere long have the most agreeable accounts from the department where you command. I beg you will be pleased to transmit every important intelligence, as early as the situation of affairs will admit. All such resolves as relate to your department shall be forwarded without delay. At present I have only to request your attention to that herewith transmitted.

"I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect,

"Sir, your most ob't and very humble serv't.

"JOHN HANCOCK, *President.*

"*Hon. Major-general Gates.*"

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"*H. Q. Buck's County, Aug. 20th*, 1777.

"Sir,

"By a letter from General Schuyler of the 13th instant, it appears that you had not reached Stillwater at that time, since which I have not had any accounts from you, but expect you had arrived there soon after that date.

"From the various representations made to me, of the disadvantage the army lay under, particularly the militia, from an apprehension of the Indian mode of fighting, I have despatched Colonel Morgan, with his corps of riflemen, to your assistance, and expect they will be with you in eight days from this date. This corps I have great dependence on, and have no doubt but they will be exceedingly useful to you; as a check given to the savages, and keeping them within proper bounds, will prevent General Burgoyne from getting intelligence as formerly, and animate your other troops, from a sense of their being more on an equality with the enemy. Colonels Courtland's and Livingston's regiments are also on their way to join you, and must of course be with you in a very few days. With these reinforcements besides the militia under General Lincoln (which by this time must be pretty considerable), I am in hopes you will find yourself at least equal to stop the progress of Mr. Burgoyne, and by cutting off his supplies of provision, &c. to render his situation ineligible.

"Since the enemy's fleet was seen off Sinipuxent, the 8th instant, we have no accounts from them which can be depended on. I am now of opinion that Charleston is the present object of General Howe's attention, though for what sufficient reason, unless he expected to drag this army after him, by appearing at different places, and thereby leave the country open to General Clinton, to march out and endeavour to form a junction with General Burgoyne, I am at a loss to determine.

"General Schuyler's sending a reinforcement to Fort Schuyler, I think was absolutely necessary; and am of

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opinion, that particular attention should be paid to the inroads leading to that quarter, as a successful stroke of the enemy there, might be a means of encouraging the whole of the Six Nations to unite against us.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"GO. WASHINGTON.

"*Major-general Gates.*"

"*Head Quarters, Aug. 22d,* 1777.

"Sir,

"Upon my arrival in this department, I found the main body of the army encamped upon Vain Schaick's island, which is made by the sprouts of the Mohawk river joining with Hudson's river, nine miles north of Albany. A brigade under General Poor encamped at Loudon's ferry, on the south bank of the Mohawk river, five miles from hence; a brigade under General Lincoln had joined General Stark at Bennington, and a brigade under General Arnold marched the 15th instant to join the militia of Tryon county, to raise the siege of Fort Stanwix. Upon leaving Philadelphia, the prospect this way appeared very gloomy; but the severe checks the enemy have met with at Bennington and in Tryon county, has given a more pleasing view to public affairs. Particular accounts of the signal victory gained by General Stark, and the severe blow General Herkimer gave Sir John Johnston and the scalpers under his command, have been transmitted to your excellency by General Schuyler. I anxiously expect the arrival of an express from General Arnold, with an account of the total defeat of the enemy in that quarter. By my calculation he reached Fort Stanwix the day before yesterday. Colonel Livingston and Courtland's regiments arrived yesterday, and immediately joined General Poor's division. I shall also order General Arnold, upon his return, to march to that post. I cannot sufficiently thank your excellency for sending Colonel Morgan's corps to this army: they will be of the

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greatest service to it; for until the late successes this way, I am told the army were quite panic struck by their Indians, and their tory and Canadian assassins in Indian dresses. Horrible indeed have been the cruelties they have wantonly committed upon many of the miserable inhabitants; insomuch that all is now fair for General Burgoyne, even if the bloody hatchet he has so barbarously used should find its way into his own head. Governor Clinton will be here to-day. Upon his arrival, I shall consult with him and General Lincoln upon the best plan to distress, and I hope finally defeat, the enemy. I am sorry to be necessitated to acquaint your excellency how neglectfully your orders have been executed at Springfield—few of the militia demanded are yet arrived, but I hear of great numbers upon the march. Your excellency's advice in regard to Morgan's corps, &c. &c. shall be carefully observed. My scouts and spies inform me, that the enemy's head quarters and main body are at Saratoga, and that they have lately been repairing the bridges between that place and Stillwater. As soon as time and circumstances will admit, I shall send your excellency a general return of this army.

"I am Sir,

"Your excellency's most ob't humble serv't.

"HORATIO GATES."

"*His Excellency Gen. Washington.*"

Colonel Morgan and his rifle corps reach head quarters.

Colonel Morgan arrived at head quarters on the 23d, and his corps got up in a few days, many of the officers and men having sickened, in consequence of the change of climate, or the effects of the march. As whatever relates to a corps of such celebrity may be interesting, I have subjoined a copy of the first return [*C*] received from Colonel Morgan, who understood the *ruse de guerre* and hard fighting, much better than he did military details or tactical evolutions: his second and third officers, Lieutenant-colonel Richard Butler,* of Pennsylvania, and

* Killed in battle, Nov. 4th, 1791.

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Major Morris* of the Jerseys, were but little inferior to him in courage and conduct. To increase the weight and effect of this corps, which formed the elite of the army, two hundred and fifty bayonets were added to it, in the hands of vigorous young men selected from the line with great caution, and placed under the immediate charge of Major H. Dearborn,† who had traversed the wilderness with Arnold, and been a fellow prisoner of Morgan in Quebec; and a more vigilant or determined soldier never wore a sword.

General Gates kept up a force in Vermont, under the direction of General Lincoln, to hang on the left and rear of the enemy, to watch his motions, take advantage of any opening he might make, and keep him in check; but all the measures of General Burgoyne were now taken with such sound precautions, as to baffle the enterprize of our partizans: in the mean time, every means were employed to clothe and arm the American troops, and by a rigid police, daily drills, and exact inspections, to prepare and equip them for the most efficient action. But during this period, the General remained in ignorance of the movements of the enemy, and knew not whether they had crossed the Hudson's river or not. Pending this suspense, a Doctor Wood, surgeon to General Burgoyne's hospitals, visited General Gates with a letter from General Burgoyne, relative to the wounded prisoners taken near Bennington, of whose treatment he complained. General Gates seized the occasion to retort upon Burgoyne, the cruelties exercised by the savages under his orders, and with his encouragement; and calling his particular attention to the fate of a young lady, a Miss M'Crea, he gave loose to his imagination, and in glowing language, painted the tragic scene in such colours, as could but excite the sympathy, and rouse the indignation of the country: and on this ground and with these motives only, was the murder of the unfortunate

General Burgoyne complains of the treatment of British prisoners.

* Mortally wounded near White Marsh, in a severe skirmish with the elite of Sir William Howe's army, December 6th, 1778.

† Late a major-general.

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Story of Miss M'Crea.

girl recorded in such sympathetic strains; for was the melancholy incident stripped of its high colouring, it might be thus related:—Miss Jenny M'Crea, a country girl, of an honest family in circumstances of mediocrity, without either beauty or accomplishments, when the American army retreated from Fort Edward the 23d of July, had the indiscretion to remain behind it, and thus voluntarily put herself in the power of the enemy. The Indians entered immediately after we retired from the place and made her prisoner; and as the party returned towards General Burgoyne's camp, it has been represented to me, they halted at a spring near the side of the road, where a controversy arose as to the right of property in the person of the captive. To put an end to the dispute, a monster tomahawked her, and thus she fell a victim to the ferocious brutality of the Indians. Her voluntary stay after our troops had departed, may be ascribed with as much justice to ignorance as to any other cause; for it cannot be presumed she could anticipate, that she would have to encounter a band of ruthless barbarians. Such exposition would not accord either with the timidity or delicacy of her sex; but it has been said that a personal attachment induced her to remain behind, and that she died for love; therefore her memory should be honoured and embalmed in the bosom of sensibility. Yet it was not until after her death, that we heard she had remained at Fort Edward, in consequence of her attachment to a refugee, who had joined the British standard. Her character was unexceptionable, and she had a cousin or brother, who was I think a surgeon's mate of the American hospital.

After General Gates had written his letter to Burgoyne, he called General Lincoln and myself into his apartment, read it to us, and requested our opinions of it, which we declined giving; but being pressed by him, with diffidence we concurred in judgment, that he had been too personal; to which the old gentleman replied with his characteristic bluntness, "By G—d! I don't believe

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either of you can mend it;"—and thus the consultation terminated.

Movement of the American army.

The American army, about six thousand strong, began to retrace its steps towards the enemy, on the 8th of September, and reached Stillwater the next day. The march was made in good order, and the character of the corps seemed renovated; courage and confidence having taken place of timidity and distrust. The ground at this place was again examined, a line for entrenchments traced, a fatigue of 1000 men put to work under Colonel Kosciusko, and the following order was issued on the 10th.—"Whether it may be immediately necessary to engage the enemy on this ground, or push them into Canada, the General has the firmest opinion that both officers and soldiers will be ready, at a moment's notice, to execute his commands." But in the progress of the work it was discovered, that the low grounds were too extensive to permit the occupancy of the heights on our left, without weakening our centre, and that by adopting the alternative, we should be exposed either to be forced or flanked: the position was therefore condemned as untenable, before a different one had been selected. It happened that I had, on the retreat of the army, taken notice of a narrow defile, two or three miles in our front, formed by a spur of the hills, jutting out close to the river. I communicated the circumstance to the General, and the ground was reconnoitred and approved; and on the 12th the army took possession of Behmus's heights, destined to become the theatre of those hard fought actions, which were to decide the fate of the campaign.

The General had received no information of the situation of the enemy, subsequent to the visit of Doctor Wood, at which time Burgoyne occupied Duer's house, at old Fort Miller, his elite at Batten-kiln, opposite to Saratoga; in fact, he knew not whether they were advancing, retreating, or stationary. This circumstance was embarrassing: parties of the riflemen had been

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tried; but being strangers to the topography of the country, they were at a loss for direction, and made no discovery. Having passed frequently between Fort Edward and Albany, and paid strict attention to the localities of the route, I believed that I could conduct a reconnoitring party with effect, and proposed it to the General, who approved my purpose, and accordingly after night-fall the same day, I marched with 150 infantry and twenty select riflemen, under that incomparable subaltern Lieutenant John Hardin.*

Under cover of a dark night, I advanced directly for Saratoga, and a little before day break I reached the summit of a lofty height, about 2 miles from that place, called Davocote. During a momentary pause to take breath, I heard the *generale* beat some distance in my front, which indicated a military movement; I therefore halted, and having formed my party in a wood on the flanks of the road, detached Lieutenant Hardin with his riflemen to my right, by the low grounds on the side of the river to make observations, and with an officer and three men I proceeded under cover of the wood on the heights, to the right bank of the Fish-kill (or creek) in the vicinity of Saratoga church. It was now broad day light; I posted my men, to keep a look out towards the road on my right, and advancing cautiously, I discovered within three hundred yards of me on the opposite bank of the creek, a body of men drawn up under arms. At this moment I heard the march beat, and casting my eyes towards the river, I perceived a column of the enemy descending from the heights below Batten-kill. These observations satisfied me General Burgoyne was advancing, and I rejoined my scout, who informed me that two of the enemy's infantry were robbing a gar-

* Afterwards General Hardin of Kentucky, an excellent officer and most valuable citizen, who having encountered a thousand dangers in the service of his country, was treacherously murdered in 1791, by a party of Indians, as he approached Sandusky with a flag of truce and a talk from General Washington. A braver soldier never lived—a better man has rarely died.

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den under the hill. We immediately made these men prisoners, and marched back with them to the detachment at the heights of Davocote, where I found Hardin who had made no discovery, and we returned to camp about noon.

By these prisoners* General Gates was informed of General Burgoyne's intentions: that chief, after immense labour and unavoidable delays, had at length brought forward from Lake George to the Hudson's river his baggage, artillery, military stores, and a month's provisions, with a sufficiency of live stock and land and water transport, to move the whole; and thus equipped, he concentrated his force, abandoned the communication with the lakes, which his numbers could not sustain, and crossed the river† to prosecute his march to Albany, agreeably to his instructions. Our labours on the fortifications of our camp were redoubled, in consequence of this advice, and calls for militia were transmitted to all quarters; the greater number of General Burgoyne's Indians had long before deserted him, and the few who remained had lost their spirit of enterprize: this circumstance gave our riflemen so decided a superiority, that on his approach he could not make a motion without our knowledge, nor peep beyond his guards with safety. The condition of the two armies was precisely reversed; and the Americans now enjoyed, in the rifle corps, all the advantages which the enemy had derived from a cloud of barbarians at the opening of the campaign.

* *Extract of a letter from General Gates to General Lincoln, dated Behmus's Heights, Sept. 13th, 1777.*

"This morning Colonel Wilkinson brought me in three prisoners, soldiers of the 20th regiment; he took them within a small distance of General Schuyler's house: they declare General Burgoyne was to march this morning towards Stillwater. This intelligence is further confirmed by two men lately come from the enemy's camp: they are also all in one story with regard to General Burgoyne's having collected his whole force at and near Saratoga.

† See his letter to Lord George Germain, dated Albany, Oct. 20th, 1777.

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General Burgoyne crossed the Hudson's river the 13th and 14th of September, and advanced with great circumspection on the 15th from Saratoga to Davocote, where he halted to repair bridges in his front. The 16th was employed on this labour, and in reconnoitring: on the 17th he advanced a mile or two, resumed his march on the 18th, and General Arnold was detached by General Gates, with 1500 men, to harass him; but after a light skirmish, he returned without loss or effecting any thing more, than picking up a few stragglers: and the enemy moved forward and encamped in two lines, about two miles from General Gates; his left on the river, and his right extending at right angles to it, across the low grounds about six hundred yards to a range of steep and lofty heights occupied by his elite, having a creek or gulley in his front, made by a rivulet which issued from a great ravine, formed by the hills which ran in a direction nearly parallel to the river, until within half a mile of the American camp.

General Burgoyne's movement from Saratoga to Davocote.

Description of his camp.

General Gates's right occupied the brow of the hill near the river, with which it was connected by a deep intrenchment; his camp, in the form of a segment of a great circle, the convex towards the enemy, extended rather obliquely to his rear, about three-fourths of a mile to a knoll occupied by his left; his front was covered from the right to the left of the centre, by a sharp ravine running parallel with his line and closely wooded: from thence to the knoll at his extreme left, the ground was level and had been partially cleared, some of the trees being felled and others girdled, beyond which in front of his left flank, and extending to the enemy's right, there were several small fields in very imperfect cultivation, the surface broken and obstructed with stumps and fallen timber, and the whole bounded on the west by a steep eminence. The extremities of this camp were defended by strong batteries, and the interval was strengthened by a breastwork without intrenchments, constructed of the bodies of felled trees, logs and rails, with an additional battery at an opening left of the centre. The right

Description of General Gates's camp.

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was almost impracticable; the left difficult of approach. I describe the defences of this position as they appeared about the 4th of October.

The intermediate space between the adverse armies on the low grounds of the river was open and in cultivation; the high land was clothed in its native woods, with the exception of three or four small, newly opened and deserted farms, separated by intervals of woodland, and bordering on the flanks of the two armies, most remote from the river; the principal of these was an oblong field, belonging to a person of the name of Freeman; there was also, exclusive of the ravines fronting the respective camps, a third ravine, about mid-way between them, running at right angles to the river. The intervening forest rendered it utterly impracticable to obtain a front view of the American position, or any part of the British except its left near the river. On the 18th Lieutenant-colonel Colburn, of the New Hampshire line, was detached to the east side of the river with a light party to observe the movements of the enemy, by climbing forest trees or other practicable means, with orders to report such observations as he might consider worthy of notice.

Further movement of the enemy.

About 8 o'clock on the morning of the 19th September, I received information from Colonel Colburn, that the enemy had struck the chief part of their tents on the plain near the river, had crossed the gulley at the gorge of the great ravine, and were ascending the heights in a direction towards our left. On making this communication to the General, he immediately ordered Colonel Morgan to advance with his corps, who was instructed, should he find the enemy approaching, to hang on their front and flanks, to retard their march, and cripple them as much as possible.

Action commences.

About half after twelve o'clock, a report of small arms announced Morgan's corps to be engaged in front of our left; the General with his suite was at this time examining the battery which had been commenced on our left: I asked leave to repair to the scene of action, but was refused with this observation, "It is your duty, Sir,

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to wait my orders." This firing was of short duration, but was soon recommenced with redoubled vivacity: I then made an excuse to visit the picket on the left for intelligence, put spurs to my horse, and directed by the sound, had entered the wood about an hundred rods, when the fire suddenly ceased: I however pursued my course, and the first officer I fell in with was Major Dearborn, who, with great animation and not a little warmth, was forming thirty or forty file of his infantry: I exchanged a few words with him, passed on and met Major Morris alone, who was never so sprightly as under a hot fire; from him I learnt that the corps was advancing by files in two lines, when they unexpectedly fell upon a picket of the enemy, which they almost instantly forced, and pursuing the fugitives, their front had as unexpectedly fallen in with the British line; that several officers and men had been made prisoners, and that to save himself, he had been obliged to push his horse through the ranks of the enemy, and escaped by a circuitous route. To shew me where the action commenced, he leaped a fence into the abandoned field of Freeman, choked up with weeds, and led me to the cabin which had been occupied by the British picket, but was then almost encircled with dead; he then cautioned me to keep a look out for the enemy, who he observed could not be far from us; and as I never admired exposition from which neither advantage nor honour could be derived, I crossed the angle of the field, leapt the fence, and just before me on a ridge discovered Lieutenant-colonel Butler with three men, all *tree'd;* from him I learnt that they had "caught a Scotch prize," that having forced the picket, they had closed with the British line, had been instantly routed, and from the suddenness of the shock and the nature of the ground, were broken and scattered in all directions; he repeated Morris's caution to me, and remarked that the enemy's sharpshooters were on the opposite side of the ravine, and that being on horseback, I should attract a shot. We changed our position, and the Colonel inquired what were Morgan's orders, and in-

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formed me that he had seen a heavy column moving towards our left. I then turned about to regain the camp, and report to the General, when my ears were saluted by an uncommon noise, which I approached, and perceived Colonel Morgan attended by two men only, who with a *turkey call*,* was collecting his dispersed troops. The moment I came up to him, he burst into tears, and exclaimed, "I am ruined, by G—d! Major Morris ran on so rapidly with the front, that they were beaten before I could get up with the *rear*,† and my men are scattered God knows where." I remarked to the Colonel that he had a long day before him to retrieve an inauspicious beginning, and informed him where I had seen his field officers, which appeared to cheer him, and we parted.

Having reported to the General, he ordered out Cilley's and Scammel's regiments, of New Hampshire, to march and fall in on the left of Morgan, for which purpose I gave them the best direction my observation on the ground enabled me to do. These regiments advanced through the woods, took ground on the left of Morgan, and the action was renewed about one o'clock, and was supported with spirit, though subject to occasional pauses, as the troops on either side advanced, retired,

* An instrument made for decoying the wild turkey.

† It was the invariable rule of Colonel Morgan when marching to action, to bring up the rear of his corps. As this mode was singular, I took occasion to enquire into his motives, and he answered me briefly, they were "to see that every man did his duty, and that cowards did not lag behind, whilst brave men were fighting." Very different was the general conduct of Mons. Greder, who for many years commanded Marshal Saxe's French regiment of infantry. "It was his rule (says the marshal) to receive the fire of the enemy, and sword in hand, to charge at the head of his colours, calling on his men to follow him." The first case supposes the men advancing in quest of an enemy, the last that they are formed to make or receive the attack. Greder's manner was the most brilliant, Morgan's certainly the most judicious. Except in cases of extraordinary pressure, it is the duty of the subordinate to lead, and the superior to direct: extraordinary cases alone authorize a departure, and the judicious officer will always avail himself of it—no rule can teach it.

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and shifted their ground. Hales's regiment of New Hampshire, Van Courtland's and Henry Livingston's of New York, and Cook's and Latimer's of the Connecticut militia, were successively led to the field, with orders to extend to the left, and support those points of the action, where they perceived the greatest pressure; our right being secured by thickets and ravines. About three o'clock the action became general; and from that period until night fall, the fire of the musketry was incessant; the enemy brought four field pieces into the engagement, but on our side the ground was impracticable to artillery. Towards evening General Learned's whole brigade was ordered out, consisting of Bailey's, Weston's, and Jackson's regiments, of Massachusetts, and James Livingston's of New York, together with Marshall's regiment of Patterson's brigade and the Massachusetts line. These troops got into action with a part of the British light corps, which had kept its ground to cover Burgoyne's right, and a column of Germans, whom he had drawn from his left just about sunset, and of consequence they were but lightly engaged, as is manifest from their loss. If these columns had met at an earlier hour of the day, something decisive must have taken place, the ground being somewhat open and on the right flank of the enemy. We had about three thousand men on the field, and the enemy, from General Burgoyne's account, about three thousand five hundred; on our part, the stress of the action fell upon Morgan's corps and Poor's brigade, and on that of the enemy it was chiefly sustained by Hamilton's brigade, consisting of the 20th, 21st, and 62d British infantry, with a brigade of artillery under Captain Jones, who was killed.

The action the effect of accident.

This battle was perfectly accidental; neither of the generals meditated an attack at the time, and but for Lieutenant-colonel Colburn's report, it would not have taken place; Burgoyne's movement being merely to take ground on the heights in front of the great ravine, to give his several corps their proper places in line, to embrace our front and cover his transport, stores, provi-

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sions and baggage in rear of his left; and on our side the defences of our camp being not half completed and reinforcements daily arriving, it was not General Gates's policy to court an action. The misconception of the adverse chiefs put them on the defensive, and confined them to the ground they casually occupied at the beginning of the action, and prevented a single manœuvre, during one of the longest, warmest, and most obstinate battles fought in America. General Gates believed that his antagonist intended to attack him, and circumstances appeared to justify the like conclusion on the part of Burgoyne; and as the thickness and depth of the intervening wood concealed the position and movements of either army from its adversary, sound caution obliged the respective commanders to guard every assailable point; thus the flower of the British army, the grenadiers and light infantry, one thousand five hundred strong, were posted on an eminence to cover its right, and stood by their arms, inactive spectators of the conflict until near sunset; while General Gates was obliged to keep his right wing on post, to prevent the enemy from forcing that flank, by the plain bordering on the river. Had either of the generals been properly apprised of the dispositions of his antagonist, a serious blow might have been struck on our left or the enemy's right; but although nothing is more common, it is as illiberal as it is unjust, to determine the merits of military operations by events exclusively. It was not without experience that the Romans erected temples to Fortune. Later times might afford motives for edifices, in which genius or wisdom would have no votaries.

The scene of action described.

The theatre of action was such, that although the combatants changed ground a dozen times in the course of the day, the contest terminated on the spot where it began. This may be explained in a few words. The British line was formed on an eminence in a thin pine wood, having before it Freeman's farm, an oblong field stretching from the centre towards its right, the ground in front sloping gently down to the verge of this field, which was

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bordered on the opposite side by a close wood; the sanguinary scene lay in the cleared ground, between the eminence occupied by the enemy and the wood just described; the fire of our marksmen from this wood was too deadly to be withstood by the enemy in line, and when they gave way and broke, our men rushing from their covert, pursued them to the eminence, where, having their flanks protected, they rallied, and charging in turn drove us back into the wood, from whence a dreadful fire would again force them to fall back; and in this manner did the battle fluctuate, like waves of a stormy sea, with alternate advantage for four hours without one moment's intermission. The British artillery fell into our possession at every charge, but we could neither turn the pieces upon the enemy, nor bring them off; the wood prevented the last, and the want of a match the first, as the lintstock was invariably carried off, and the rapidity of the transitions did not allow us time to provide one. The slaughter of this brigade of artillerists was remarkable, the captain and thirty-six men being killed or wounded out of forty-eight. It was truly a gallant conflict, in which death by familiarity lost his terrors, and certainly a drawn battle, as night alone terminated it; the British army keeping its ground in rear of the field of action, and our corps, when they could no longer distinguish objects, retiring to their own camp.—Yet General Burgoyne claimed a victory, as may be seen by the following letters* to Brigadier-general Powell, commanding at Ticonderoga.

* Prior to the action of the 19th, Lieutenant Hardin had been detached with a light party to the rear of the British army, to take a prisoner, and pick up intelligence. On his return near Saratoga, the 22d, he met an Indian courier in a path on the summit of a sharp ridge; they were within a few paces, presented and fired at the same instant; the Indian fell, and Hardin escaped with a scratch of his antagonist's ball on his left side; the letters of Burgoyne to Powell, and several others were found in the shot pouch of the dead Indian, and delivered by the Lieutenant at head quarters.

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"*Camp near Stillwater, Sept.* 20, 1777.

"Dear Sir,

General Burgoyne's account of the action.

"I take the first opportunity to inform you we have had a smart and very honourable action, and are now encamped in the front of the field, which must demonstrate our victory beyond the power of even an American newswriter to explain away.

"The loss on either side cannot be particularly ascertained.

"Be so good as to give Sir Guy Carleton an account of this event, with my respects to him, till I can have an opportunity of sending him the particulars by a safe conveyance.

"I am, Dear Sir, with great esteem,

"Your most obedient servant,

"J. BURGOYNE."

"*Camp near Stillwater, Sept.* 21, 1777.

"Dear Sir,

"I hear the enemy is not a little disconcerted with the reception they met with in the action of the 19th. We found five hundred of their bodies the morning after.

"Had the action happened nearer the Hudson's river than it did, so that the left column, which moved near the shore, could have been brought into action early, not a man had escaped. It is said they are in some force of militia towards Connecticut, with a detachment at Paulet. If so press on St. Leger to put in execution the plan of his instructions.

"Having writ to you more at large yesterday, I have only to add my good wishes and have the honour to be,

"Dear Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"J. BURGOYNE."

To correct these illusions of General Burgoyne, I will beg leave to introduce a letter which I wrote the

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day after the action to Colonel Vischer, chairman of the committee at Albany, by order of General Gates, in which there could be no interest to deceive; but should this document fail of effect, then the following official letter of General Gates and the return [*D*] of killed and wounded must remove all doubts.

"*Camp 4 miles above Stillwater, Sept.* 20, 1777.

"Dear Sir,

Colonel Wilkinson's account of the action of the 19th Sept. 1777.

"General Gates being extremely hurried has desired me to answer your letter of this day. The committee have his hearty thanks for their attention paid to the wounded. The wagons they have sent on will meet them at Stillwater, to which place they have been sent in boats. The General is sensible that the committee will afford the director-general, Dr. Potts, every assistance in their power, whose care and attention to those unfortunate brave men, deserves the highest credit.

"Being yesterday informed by our reconnoitring parties that the enemy had struck their camp and were advancing towards our left, the General detached Colonel Morgan's light corps to examine their direction and harass their advance. This party at half past twelve fell in with a picket of the enemy which they immediately drove, and after a brisk fire were beat back by a strong reinforcement. This skirmish drew a regiment from our camp, and the main body of the enemy to support the action, which after a short cessation was renewed with double ardour, and continued incessant till the close of the day, when our men retired to camp, and the enemy a small distance in rear of the field. The succour which we occasionally detached amounted to eleven continental and two militia regiments. I have not yet obtained a return, but have reason to believe that our killed do not exceed eighty, and that the missing and wounded do not amount to two hundred. The concurrent testimony of the prisoners and deserters of various characters, assures

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us, that General Burgoyne who commanded in person was wounded* in the left shoulder, that the 62d regiment was cut to pieces, and that the enemy suffered extremely in every quarter where they were engaged. As General Burgoyne's situation will shortly constrain him to a decisive action, reinforcements should be immediately pushed forward to our assistance, as our numbers are far from being equal to an insurance of victory, and every bosom must anticipate the consequances of a defeat. The enemy have quietly licked their sores this day.

"The news of the taking of Ticonderoga is corroborated by several prisoners, and as an attack was designed on that post, I am inclined to believe it.

"I am, Dear Sir, &c.

"JAMES WILKINSON.

"*Colonel Matt. Vischer.*"

Extract of a letter from Major-general Gates to the honourable John Hancock, President of Congress, dated Camp, Heights above Behmans, Sept. 22d, 1777.

"Friday morning I was informed by my reconnoitring parties, that the enemy had struck their camp, and were removing towards our left. I immediately detached Colonel Morgan's corps, consisting of the rifle regiment and the light infantry of the army, to observe their direction, and harass their advance. This party at half-past twelve, fell in with a picket of the enemy, which they immediately drove; but the enemy being reinforced, after a brisk conflict they were in turn obliged to retire. This skirmish drew the main body of the enemy, and a brigade from my left, to support the action, which after a short cessation, was renewed with great warmth and violence. At this instant, hearing from prisoners that the whole British force and a division of foreigners, had en-

* This was an error, it was Captain Green aid-de-camp to General Philips, who was wounded.

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gaged our party, I reinforced with four more regiments. This continued the action till the close of day, when both armies retired from the field. Inclosed is a return of our loss, and I am well assured, by the concurrent testimony of prisoners and deserters of various characters, that General Burgoyne, who commanded in person, received a wound in his left shoulder—that the 62d regiment was cut to pieces, and that the enemy suffered extremely in every quarter where they were engaged. The general good behaviour of the troops on this important occasion, cannot be surpassed by the most veteran army: to discriminate in praise of the officers would be injustice, as they all deserve the honour and applause of Congress: Lieutenant-colonel Colburn, and Lieutenant-colonel Adams, with the rest of the unfortunate brave who fell in their country's cause, leave a lasting monument to their glory. The armies remain encamped within two miles of each other.

"This instant I wrote to all the neighbouring states, and pressingly demanded the immediate march of their militia. When proper reinforcements arrive, I hope to give your excellency more interesting intelligence. Inclosed is a return of the army, which but barely equals that of the enemy."

No general officer on the field of battle till the evening.

It is worthy of remark, *that not a single general officer was on the field of battle the 19th Sept.* until the evening, when General Learned was ordered out; about the same time Generals Gates and Arnold were in front of the centre of the camp, listening to the peal of small arms, when Colonel M. Lewis* deputy quarter-master general returned from the field, and being questioned by the General, he reported the undecisive progress of the action; at which Arnold exclaimed, "*by G—d I will soon put an end to it,*" and clapping spurs to his horse, galloped off at full speed; Colonel Lewis immediately observed to General

* Late Major-general in the United States service.

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Gates, "you had better order him back, the action is going well, he may by some rash act do mischief." I was instantly despatched, overtook, and remanded Arnold to camp. This battle then, was fought by the general concert and zealous co-operation of the corps engaged, and was sustained more by individual courage than military discipline, for it will be seen by reference to the return of killed and wounded, that Colonel Cook's regiment of Connecticut militia, suffered more than any other, except the intrepid Cilley's; in the course of the day prisoners were made on both sides. We had three officers* and twenty privates taken, and we captured upwards of an hundred of the enemy.

Action sustained by individual courage rather than military skill.

The morning after the action, I visited the wounded prisoners who had not been dressed, and discovered a charming youth not more than 16 years old, lying among them; feeble, faint, pale and stiff in his gore, the delicacy of his aspect, and the quality of his clothing attracted my attention, and on enquiry, I found he was an Ensign Phillips; he told me he had fallen by a wound in his leg or thigh, and as he lay on the ground was shot through the body by an army follower, a murderous villain, who avowed the deed, but I forgot his name; the moans of this hapless youth affected me to tears; I raised him from the straw on which he lay, took him in my arms and removed him to a tent, where every comfort was provided and every attention paid to him, but his wounds were mortal, and he expired on the 21st; when his name was first mentioned to General Gates, he exclaimed "just Heaven! he may be the nephew of my wife," but the fact was otherwise.

Death of Ensign Phillips, a wounded prisoner.

Let those parents who are now training their children for the military profession; let those misguided patriots, who are inculcating principles of education subversive of the foundations of the republic, look on this picture of

Reflections thereon.

* Captain Vanswearingen and Lieutenant Moore of Morgan's corps, and Captain Jason Watts of Cilley's regiment.

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distress, taken from the life, of a youth in a strange land, far removed from friends and relations, co-mingled with the dying and the dead, himself wounded, helpless and expiring with agony, and then should political considerations fail of effect, I hope, the feelings of affection and the obligations of humanity, may induce them to discountenance the pursuits of war, and save their offspring from the seductions of the plume and the sword, for the more solid and useful avocations of civil life; by which alone peace and virtue and the republic can be preserved, and perpetuated.—A dupe during my whole life, to the prejudices I now reprobate, I speak from experience, and discharge a conscientious duty, when I warn my country against military enthusiasm, and the pride of arms; and against the arts and intrigues by which the yeomanry, the palladium of the republic, are depreciated, and standing armies and navies are encouraged.—For what would it avail the citizens of the United States, if, in a political frenzy, they should barter their rights and liberties for national renown? And who would exchange the blessings of freedom, for the repute of having eclipsed the whole human race, in feats of valour and deeds of arms? This is a serious question! It affects the vital interests of every freeman, and the course of the government makes it proper and necessary, that the citizens of these states should pause and reflect before it be too late; we have escaped from one war with a crippled constitution; the next will probably destroy it; therefore, let the motto of the state be PEACE.

The authentic return which is presented to the reader will exhibit our loss of killed, wounded and missing; and the names of the meritorious officers who fought and bled on that memorable day, are recorded that they may be handed down to posterity, in honour of their families and descendants; frequently in the course of this action did I see private men, after getting their wounds bound up, return to the field of battle; our whole loss was reported at 65 killed, 218 wounded and 38 missing, but of the last fifteen

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were killed; and I learned from Lieutenant-colonel Kingston, General Burgoyne's adjutant-general, after the convention of Saratoga, that the British loss was 600 killed and wounded, but before the House of Commons he states the number at 500, or upwards.

Several incidents occurred immediately before and after the action of the 19th of September, which may be worthy of record; of these the conduct of the heroes of Bennington, was not the least extraordinary.

General Lincoln projects a successful enterprise againstthe enemy.

General Lincoln who had been detached to the Hampshire grants, as has been observed, projected an enterprise against the enemy's post, at the north end of Lake George, which was handsomely executed by Colonel Brown; who, on the 18th September surprised and made prisoners a considerable part of four companies of the 53d British regiment, released 100 prisoners, and took an armed sloop with several sea officers; thence he pushed his operations in concert with Colonel Johnson, against Ticonderoga, and Mount Independence, but for want of suitable artillery and munitions of war, he could make no impression on those posts. Previous to this enterprise, the movements of General Burgoyne, had induced General Gates to order a junction of the militia from the Hampshire grants, with the main body, in consequence of which General Stark, by easy marches and a circuitous route, reached head-quarters with his corps on the morning of the 18th, the day preceding the action. The army was animated by the arrival of a band of citizen-soldiers who had conquered the Germans and killed their commander near Bennington; but the term of service, for which these men were engaged, expired with the day, and every exertion was made, to induce them, to wait the event of an action, which was daily expected; but to the exhortations of the commander in chief, and the persuasions of many other officers, no decisive reply could be obtained. General Stark and his subordinates, "*thought it proper, and necessary* they should adhere to the service," but I observed they employed no influence

Departure of the militia the day pre-

to promote the end, which was in effect to discourage it; the men communicated with each other in whispers, and a buz was heard around their fires; for they had neither unpacked the baggage which they carried on their backs, nor laid down to repose; I left this hord of hardy freemen, about 11 o'clock, determined to watch the result, and about 5 minutes after 12, I discovered them in motion, the aid-de-camp of the General called for the parole, to pass the guards of the camp, and I verily believe neither officer nor private was left behind; nor could they have been beyond the sound of the action when it began, yet not a man returned. This punctuality of the father, the husband and the son, who till their own ground and enjoy the sweets of domestic life, is not reprehensible, since it is enjoined by an irresistible impulse of nature. These citizens had fought once, and having served the term of their engagement, were desirous to tell the tale of "feats performed," and look into their private affairs, after which they were ready again to take arms; when the agents of the government shall cease to sacrifice the interests of the public to the spirit of faction; when the sacred obligations which every man owes to the defence of the country, shall produce an impartial distribution of duties among all the people, and call forth the yeomanry by salutary laws, in seasonable requisitions, then there will be no chasms in the ranks of the militia, numbers will always follow an exact and well defined rotation, and punctuality in service will become a point of honour.

vious to the action, ascribed to the officers.

On the morning of the 20th about 7 o'clock, a deserter was escorted through a thick fog to the adjutant-general's quarters; he was from the 62d regiment; his painted lips shewed that he had been uncapping cartridges with his teeth, and had not since washed his face: on his examination he declared, "that he had been in the whole of the action the day before, that after night all the wounded and the women had been removed to the encampment and hospital tents near the river, and that fresh ammunition had been served to the troops who had

Arrival of a British deserter.

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been engaged (as a proof of which he shewed his cartridge box with 60 rounds); that he had left the ranks not 15 minutes before, pretending an occasion of nature; that the whole army was under arms, and orders had been given for the attack of our lines; that the mutiny act had been read at the head of each corps, and that they expected to march in ten minutes." He appeared to be much alarmed, and begged to be discharged with a pass, declaring that we should have "the grenadiers at our lines on the left, in fifteen minutes." Full credit was given to the report, and our lines were manned, and the troops exhorted; but we were badly fitted to defend works, or meet the close rencontre; the late hour at which the action closed the day before, the fatigue of officers and men, and the defects of our organization, had prevented the left wing from drawing ammunition, and we could not boast of more than a bayonet for every three muskets; the fog obscured every object at the short distance of twenty yards. We passed an hour of awful expectation and suspense, during which, hope, fear and anxiety played on the imagination: many could hear the movement of the enemy, and others could discern through the floating mist the advance of their column; but between eight and nine o'clock the sun dispersed the vapour, and we had no enemy in view; the report of the deserter was discredited, and the troops dismissed; and yet his information was circumstantially correct, as is proved by the following authentic facts.

The deserters account confirmed afterwards by Major Philips in a conversation with Wilkinson.

In the summer after the convention of Saratoga, I was dining with Major-general Phillips, at his quarters in Cambridge, near Boston, when the conversation turning upon our campaign on the Hudson's river, he was remarking, how often the fortune of war and the fate of empires were determined by circumstances trivial and unexpected; and by way of illustration he gave me the following anecdote:—"After the affair of the 19th September terminated, General Burgoyne determined to attack you the next morning on your left, with his whole force; our wounded, and sick, and women had been disposed of at

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the river; the army was formed early on the morning of the 20th, and we waited only for the dispersion of the fog, when General Fraser observed to General Burgoyne, that the grenadiers and light infantry who were to lead the attack, appeared fatigued by the duty of the preceding day, and that if he would suspend the operation until the next morning, he was persuaded they would carry the attack with more vivacity. Burgoyne yielded to the proposition of Fraser; the orders were countermanded, and the corps returned to camp; and as if intended for your safety and our destruction, in the course of the night a spy reached Burgoyne with a letter from General Sir Henry Clinton,* advising him of his in-

* *Copy of a letter from General Burgoyne to Sir Henry Clinton, Sept. 23d, 1777.—received Oct. 5th.*

"Have lost the old cypher, but being sure from the tenor of your letter you meant it so to be read, I have made it out—An attack, or the menace of an attack, upon Montgomery, must be of great use, as it will draw away a part of this force, and I will follow them close. Do it my dear friend directly. Yours ever faithfully. J. B."

From the Same to the Same, Sept. 28th, 1777.—received Oct. 5th, 1777.

"The bearer, Captain Campbell, an officer of great merit and full confidence, is charged with an exact duplicate of my message to your excellency despatched yesterday by another officer. I request the most speedy answer by triplicate. Believe me, &c.

"J. BURGOYNE."

Copy of a conversation held between Captain Campbell and Sir Henry Clinton.

"Captain Campbell was desired by General Burgoyne to tell me, that the general's whole army did not exceed 5000 men; that the consequences of the battle on the 19th, was the loss of between five and six hundred men, that the enemy was within a mile and an half of him; that he knew not their certain numbers, but believed them to be twelve or fourteen thousand men; that there was besides a considerable body in his rear; that he wished to receive my orders whether he should attack or retreat to the lakes; that he had but provision to the 20th of this month, and that he would not have given up his communications with Ticonderoga, had he not expected a co-operating army at Albany; that he wished to know my positive answer as soon as possible, whether I could open a communication with Al-

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tended expedition against the highlands, which determined Burgoyne to postpone the meditated attack of your army, and wait events; the golden, glorious opportunity was lost—you grew stronger every day, and on the 7th of October overwhelmed us."

General Burgoyne in his defence admits these facts substantially, and what an extraordinary coincidence of circumstances do they unfold. The apparent fatigue of the grenadiers, who it was true had stood by their arms the day before, but had rested all night, must have been rather affected than real, but their condition gained time for the arrival of Clinton's messenger, whose every step was taken at the peril of his life, and yet he escaped our vigilance, and reached General Burgoyne in season to prevent the proposed attack of the 21st, and in the mean time we completed our lines, and received a considerable accession of strength; but if General Burgoyne had attacked us on the 20th or 21st of September, as he intended, his force would have enabled him to lead a column of 5000 rank and file against our left, where the ground was most favourable to his approach; whilst a feint on our right, by the plain near the river, would have kept every man at his station within our extensive lines; and under such advantages on his side, it is highly probable, he would have gained a decisive victory, and taken our artillery and baggage;

Probable result of General Burgoyne's attack, had he made it on the 20th or 21st.

bany, when I should be there, and when there keep my communication with New York; that if he did not hear from me by the 15th inst. he should retire.—To which I returned the following answer by Captain Campbell, viz. *That not having received any instructions from the commander in chief respecting the northern army, and unacquainted even with his intentions respecting that army, except his wishes that they should get to Albany,* Sir H. Clinton cannot presume to give any orders to General Burgoyne. General Burgoyne could not suppose Sir H. Clinton had an idea of penetrating to Albany, with the small force he mentioned in his last letter. What he offered in that letter he has now undertaken: cannot by any means promise himself success, but hopes it will be at any rate serviceable to General Burgoyne, as General Burgoyne says in his letter answering the offer (23d Sept.) *that even the menace of an attack would be of service.*" See Parliamentary Register, 1778, p. 245—247.

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for although our numbers in rank and file exceeded six thousand, the sick, casualties, and contingencies of the service, would not have left us more than five thousand five hundred men for defence; and from the formation of our camp, by penetrating on the left, he would have cut off our right; and shall we presume to ascribe this critical combination of incidents to mere accident, or the caprice of fortune?—Presumptuous as well as blind must he be who does so.

The effects of the combat of the 19th Sept. in which resistance was interpreted into triumph by both armies, produced the most favourable consequences: the militia flocked to our camp, and a band of Oneida Indians joined our standard. These sons of the forest almost daily presented scalps and prisoners at head quarters, and their shocking death halloo resounded through our lines. This was turning upon the enemy, the vengeance which they had prepared to inflict upon us; but it was an inhuman resort against which my feelings revolted.

Difference between General Gates and General Arnold.

About this time a difference took place between General Gates and General Arnold, which terminated in a public quarrel, and may be traced to official presumption and conscious superiority on one side, and an arrogant spirit and impatience of command on the other. General Gates had, by a violent exertion of power, screened Arnold from disgrace the preceding campaign, and Arnold conceived he had by his voluntary perils and the eclat acquired in the command of the fleet on Lake Champlain, cancelled the obligation. Gates trusted to the confidence of Congress for the support of his authority, and Arnold relied on feats of arms and intrepidity of character for popular patronage. With such pretensions, the smallest spark of collision sufficed to light up the flames of discord.

In perfect ignorance of any precedent arrangement, between General Gates and General Arnold, I had observed that the latter exercised command over the elite corps under Colonel Morgan, which was neither brigaded nor encamped in the line, and was of right and propriety responsible to head quarters only. These anomalies in-

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terfered with the staff duties as well as general details, and I mentioned the circumstance to General Gates, who, on the 22d September issued the following order, to establish a perfect understanding of his intentions.

GENERAL ORDER.

General order of 22d Sept.

"Colonel Morgan's corps not being attached to any brigade or division of the army, he is to make returns and reports to head quarters only; from whence alone he is to receive orders."

As soon as this order was handed to Arnold, he repaired to head quarters in great warmth, asserted his pretensions to the command of the elite, and was ridiculed by General Gates: high words and gross language ensued, and Arnold retired in a rage. The consequences of this interview will be best explained by the following correspondence, in which General Arnold hastily committed himself, and General Gates seizing the advantage, occluded him from command.

"*Camp Stillwater, Sept. 22d, 1777.*

"Sir,

General Arnold's letter to General Gates.

"When I joined the army at Vanschaick's Island, the first instant you were pleased to order me to Loudon's ferry to take the command of Generals Poor's and Learned's brigade and Colonel Morgan's battalion of riflemen and light infantry. Your commands were immediately obeyed, I have repeatedly since received your orders respecting the corps, as belonging to my division, which has often been mentioned in general orders,* and the gentlemen commanding those corps have understood themselves as my division. On the 9th instant you desired me to annex the New York and Connecticut militia to such brigades as I thought proper in my division, which I accordingly did, and ordered the New York mi-

* This was not correct as related to Morgan's corps.

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litia to join General Poor's brigade, and the Connecticut General Learned's. The next day I was surprised to observe in general orders, the New York militia annexed to General Glover's brigade, which placed me in the ridiculous light of presuming to give orders I had no right to do, and having them publicly contradicted, which I mentioned to you as I thought it a mistake of the deputy adjutant-general, you then observed that the mistake was your own, and that it should be mentioned as such in the ensuing orders, which has never been done.

"On the 19th inst. when advice was received that the enemy were approaching, I took the liberty to give it as my opinion that we ought to march out and attack them. You desired me to send Colonel Morgan and the light infantry, and support* them; I obeyed your orders; and before the action was over, I found it necessary to send out the whole of my division to support the attack; no other troops were engaged that day except Colonel Marshal's regiment of General Patterson's brigade. I have been informed that in the returns transmitted to Congress of the killed and wounded in the action, the troops were mentioned as a detachment from the army, and in the orders of this day I observe it is mentioned that Colonel Morgan's corps, not being in any brigade or division of this army, are to make returns and reports only to head-quarters from whence they are alone to receive orders; although it is notorious to the whole army, they have been in and done duty with my division for some time past.

"When I mentioned these matters to you this day, you were pleased to say in contradiction to your repeated orders, you did not know I was a Major-general or had any command in the army. I have ever supposed a Major-general's command of four thousand men, a proper division, and no detachment when composed of whole bri-

* This is incorrect in fact, as the orders went in detail from head-quarters, though it is not known what conversation passed between the Generals.

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gades, forming one wing of the army, and that the general and troops, if guilty of misconduct or cowardly behaviour in time of action were justly chargeable as a division. And that if on the other hand they behaved with spirit and firmness in action, they were justly entitled to the applause due to a proper division, not a detachment of the army. Had my division behaved ill, the other division of the army would have thought it extremely hard to have been amenable for their conduct. I mentioned these matters as I wish justice done to the division as well as particular regiments or persons.

"From what reason I know not (as I am conscious of no offence or neglect of duty,) I have lately observed little or no attention paid to any proposals I have thought it my duty to make for the public service, and when a measure I have proposed has been agreed to, it has been immediately contradicted. I have been received with the greatest coolness at head quarters, and often huffed in such a manner as must mortify a person with less pride than I have and in my station in the army. You observed you expected General Lincoln in a day or two, when I should have no command of a division, that you thought me of little consequence to the army, and that you would with all your heart give me a pass to leave it, whenever I thought proper. As I find your observation very just, that I am not or that you wish me of little consequence in the army, and as I have the interest and safety of my country at heart I wish to be where I can be of the most service to her. I therefore, as General Lincoln is arrived, have to request your pass to Philadelphia with my two aid-de-camps and their servants, where I propose to join General Washington, and may possibly have it in my power to serve my country, although I am thought of no consequence in this department.

"I am, with due respect, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"B. ARNOLD.

"*Hon. Major-general Gates.*"

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"23d Sept. 1777.

"Sir,

"Major-general Arnold having desired permission for himself and aids-de-camp to go to Philadelphia, I have granted his request. His reasons for asking to leave the army at this time, shall with my answers be transmitted to your excellency.

"I am, Sir, &c.

"H. GATES.

"*The Hon. John Hancock,*
President of Congress."

"*Head Quarters, 23d Sept.* 1777.

"Sir,

"I did not receive your letter until I was going into bed last night. The permission you request for yourself and aids-de-camp to go to Philadelphia is inclosed.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient and humble servant,

"HORATIO GATES.

"*Hon. Major-general Arnold.*"

"*Camp Stillwater, Sept. 23d,* 1777.

"Sir,

"When I wrote you yesterday I thought myself entitled to an answer, and that you would at least have condescended to acquaint me with the reasons which have induced you to treat me with affront and indignity, in a public manner which I mentioned and which has been observed by many gentlemen of the army; I am conscious of none, but if I have been guilty of any crimes deserving such treatment, I wish to have them pointed out, that I may have an opportunity of vindicating my conduct. I know no reason for your conduct unless I have been traduced by some designing *villain.*

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"I requested permission for myself and aids to go to Philadelphia, instead of which you have sent me a letter to the honourable John Hancock, esq. which I have returned. If you have any letters for that gentleman which you think proper to send sealed, I will take charge of them. I once more request your permission for myself and aids to pass to Philadelphia.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"B. ARNOLD.

"*Hon. Major-general Gates.*"

"*Head Quarters, 23d Sept.* 1777.

"Sir,

"You wrote me nothing last night but what had been sufficiently altercated between us in the evening. I then gave you such answers to all your objections as I think were satisfactory. I know not what you mean by insult or indignity. I made you such replies only as I conceived proper. As to the open letter I sent you to Mr. Hancock, it was the civilest method I could devise of acquainting Congress with your leaving the army. And is to all intents and purposes as full a pass as can be desired. I sent it unsealed, as being the more complaisant to you, and is what is commonly done upon such occasions. That not being so agreeable to you as a common pass, I send you one inclosed.

"I am, Sir, &c.

"H. GATES.

"*Hon. General Arnold.*"

"*Camp, Sept. 27th,* 1777.

"General Arnold presents his compliments to General Gates and needs not to be told that the commander in chief only, of the northern department, has a right to order payments. He conceives however, he had a right to offer a reward as it was done in the absence of General Schuyler, when General Arnold had the command of the army. He is surprised to find the justice of his certifi-

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cate for the pitiful sum of fifty dollars disputed. He believes no other person could have suspected him guilty of a deceit sooner than they would have done General Gates.

"*To the Hon. Major-general Gates.*"

"*Camp, 28th Sept.* 1777.

"Sir,

"I am surprised you should be offended at my answer to your certificate in favour of the continental soldier, who killed the Indian upon the retreat of the army from Fort Edward, since you know I was blamed last year for granting my warrants upon such certificates. As to the smallness of the sum, that is no reason for my breaking my instructions. The justice of your certificate, I have never called in question, nor suspected you of deceit in that particular; so cannot see the shadow of a reason for the last part of your note.

"I am, Sir,

"Your humble servant,

"H. GATES."

"*Camp Stillwater, October* 1, 1777.

"Sir,

"Notwithstanding the repeated ill treatment I have met with, and continued daily to receive, treated only as a cypher in the army, never consulted or acquainted with one occurrence in the army, which I know only by accident, while I have every reason to think your treatment proceeds from a spirit of jealousy, and that I have every thing to fear from the malice of my enemies, conscious of my own innocency and integrity, I am determined to sacrifice my feelings, present peace and quiet, to the public good, and continue in the army at this critical juncture, when my country needs every support.

"I beg leave to say, that when Congress sent me into this department at the request of his excellency General Washington, they thought me of some consequence, and I believe expected the commander in chief, would consult

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with me, or at least would have taken my opinion on public matters. I think it my duty (which nothing shall deter me from doing) to acquaint you the army are clamorous for action. The militia who compose a great part of the army are already threatening to go home. One fortnight's inaction will, I make no doubt, lessen your army by sickness and defection at least four thousand men, in which time the enemy may be reinforced or make good their retreat.

"I have reason to think, from intelligence since received, that had we improved the 20th of September it might have ruined the enemy, that is past, let me intreat you to improve the present time.

"I hope you will not impute this hint to a wish to command the army, or to outshine you, when I assure you it proceeds from my zeal for the cause of my country in which I expect to rise or fall.

"I am, Sir,

"Your humble servant,

"B. ARNOLD.

"*Hon. Major-general Gates.*"

Removed from command and excluded from head quarters, General Arnold experienced the keenest mortification, and too late discovered that he would hazard disgrace, by voluntarily leaving the army at so eventful a period of the campaign; yet he was too high spirited and presuming to make a concession or seek an explanation: his sense of subordination, and knowledge of service are explained by his letters, which require no comment. In this awkward situation, he hung about the camp, professing his intention to depart from day to day, murmuring discontent and scattering sedition, which nought but General Gates's plenary powers and good fortune could have kept in check. On the suspension of Arnold's authority, General Gates took the division which had belonged to him under his immediate command, as he lacked decision to confer it on another, although he continued

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CHAPTER XX.

General Washington.

Power and greatness are frequently confounded, yet nothing can be more distinct; the first may spring from birth, from fortune, from cunning, and a thousand adventitious circumstances; the last depends on a combination of the capacities of the head, the virtues of the heart, and active dispositions to promote the happiness of mankind; the former commands respect, the latter invites attachment; veneration and awe are due to place; confidence and esteem to persons; men may become illustrious by their vices, but they never can be truly great without virtue; Alexander was an illustrious conqueror, but a murderer and a nuisance to society; Cæsar was an illustrious usurper, and became the tyrant of his country; between him and Catiline there was no difference but in their exterior habits, their modes of pursuing their ambitious views, and the peculiar characters of their minds in choosing their means and directing their measures. The recollection of such characters inspires the sensible and the virtuous heart with indignation and abhorrence, whilst it swells with complacency and delight at the remembrance of Epaminondas and Scipio. Frederick was an illustrious butcher, not devoid of greatness, because he took pains to meliorate the condition of his subjects, but he was a stranger to religion and virtue. The splendour of Napoleon's glories sickens the sight, whilst the gentle beams which irradiate the character of General Washington cheers the heart and consoles the friends of humanity.

Distinguished characters like meteors catch the attention by their rarity and their splendour, and whether

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from vain curiosity or rational inquiry, for profit or for amusement, mankind seek with avidity the words and actions, and even the frivolous incidents which emanate from or bear relation to public men, who have been conspicuous for their virtues or their vices; so much is intellectual man governed by the impressions made upon his senses: I therefore anticipate the reader's pardon for presenting to him a brief illustration of characters which cannot fail to interest him.

During my intercourse with General Hamilton at New York in 1799, our official engagements produced frequent references to the opinion of General Washington, and I embraced the occasion, to obtain a more distinct view of the private character of that great man than our military relations had permitted.

There may be many living witnesses of the fact, that Sir Henry Clinton, whilst he commanded in New York, occupied the house of Captain Kennedy, of the British navy, near the battery; and that there were no buildings at that time between it and the river. In these quarters the chief reposed in security with the ordinary ground in front, relying on naval protection for safety in his rear. General Washington had by his spies ascertained precisely the approaches, not only to Sir Henry's quarters, but to his bed-chamber, and the enterprise appeared so feasible, that he determined to carry him off. The arrangements were made for light whale boats with muffled oars, and 150 Marblehead seamen, properly commanded;* every thing being ready, the detachment waited for the approach of night; in the interval Colonel Hamilton took occasion to observe to the General, that "there could be little doubt of the success of the enterprise, but," said he, "have you examined the consequences of it?" The General inquired "in what respect?" "Why," replied Hamilton, "it has occurred to me that we shall rather lose than gain by removing Sir Henry

* As well as I recollect, Colonel Humphreys, of Connecticut, an aid-de-camp of the General, was selected for this service.

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Clinton from the command of the British army, because we perfectly understand his character, and by taking him off we only make way for some other, perhaps an abler officer, whose character and dispositions we may have to learn." The General acknowledged these reflections had not occurred to him, but with noble frankness admitted their force, thanked Colonel Hamilton for his suggestion, and the expedition was abandoned. I had heard of this incident, and making inquiry of General Hamilton relative to the fact, he gave the preceding details.

On other occasions, when in conversation respecting this great man, General Hamilton observed, that it was difficult to decide, whether General Washington was greater in the field or in the cabinet; he said the world had very naturally decided in favour of his military capacity, but from the sum of his observations, he considered him at least equally sound as a statesman; for whatever might have been the jealousies or the insinuations of party, it was no humiliation to him to acknowledge, that he had in council frequently differed in opinion with President Washington, and that events had generally proved that he was wrong and the President right. But he dwelt on a specific trait in General Washington's character, which it were devoutly to be wished his successors could imitate; this was, that in "*all appointments to office, wherein he was especially called to exercise his own judgment, he nobly divested himself of sympathy or antipathy, and made what he considered the fitness of the agent to the office the ground of his choice;*" as an evidence of the fact, he mentioned, that "*Colonel Pickering, at the time he was appointed Postmaster-general, was no favourite of President Washington, but that he knew the Colonel to be a man of industry and method, and had confidence in his integrity; and as to myself,*" said he, "*there had been for some time such a standing, or misunderstanding, between us, that I had no more expectation of office than I had of being appointed Pope's nuncio, when I received the invitation to*

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take charge of the treasury department." That a coolness had taken place between the Commander in Chief and Colonel Hamilton, towards the close of the war, and that the Colonel had left his family, was notorious, but there were very few persons acquainted with the cause, which I shall now submit to my readers, as correctly as memory will serve me, and should I commit an error, will refer to General St. Clair for correction, who is the only man living, within my knowledge, acquainted with the facts.

The army was encamped in New Jersey at some point east of the Rariton, and perhaps at Perackness. The General was just mounting his horse, to visit his advanced post, when he recollected a letter he had recently received from the British commander, which it occurred to him he might have occasion for whilst at the lines; he called Colonel Hamilton, and requested him "to hand the letter to him." The Colonel returned to the office, but not being able to place his hand on it, reported, that "it was mislaid." The General replied, "I must have it." Search was again made without effect, and Colonel Hamilton returning, repeated that the letter had been mislaid, and expressed his sorrow at not being "*able to find it.*" The General rejoined with warmth, "Sir you shall find it." Hamilton was astonished, but replied promptly, "I shall find it, Sir, but must let you know, that in addressing me, you do not speak to a menial." The occasion was honourable to the parties; it was the quarrel of Sully and Henry; it furnished General Washington an occasion for the display of his magnanimity, and Colonel Hamilton an opportunity to assert his personal dignity and independence of mind. Colonel Hamilton retired from Head Quarters, but was appointed to the command of a battalion in the elite corps, at the head of which he stormed a redoubt during the siege of York before the surrender of Cornwallis.

It would be presumptuous for me to attempt the eulogy of a man who has deservedly attracted the attention and

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to deny it to Arnold, whom he suffered to retain his quarters in camp. Major-general Lincoln arrived on the 22d, and the command of the right wing was assigned to him on the 25th.

CHAPTER VII.

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General Burgoyne and General Gates fortify their respective camps.—St. Leger's intercepted letter.—Colonel Wilkinson reconnoitres the left of the enemy, and makes forty-five prisoners.—Sickness of the army.—Correspondence between General Washington and General Gates.—Wilkinson reports to General Gates, and gives an opinion as to the enemy's intentions on the 7th of October.—General Gates orders Colonel Morgan to attack the enemy.—Position of the enemy.—Morgan's plan of attack.—The enemy attacked.—Gives way, and retreats in disorder.—Description of that part of the ground lately occupied by the British grenadiers.—Wilkinson falls in with Major Ackland, wounded through both legs.—Saves his life, and sends him into camp.—Farther description of the action.—Statement respecting General Arnold's conduct.—He is wounded in the latter end of the action.—Wilkinson's opinions of the enemy's intentions borne out by General Burgoyne's testimony.—Colonel Wilkinson's letter to Governor Clinton of 9th October.—Governor Clinton's conduct contrasted with President Madison's.—Success of Sir Henry Clinton counteracted by Burgoyne's defeat.—Governor Clinton's letter of 7th Oct.—General Gates's letter of the 12th Oct.—Army takes possession of the enemy's abandoned camp.—Description of the ground on which General Burgoyne condensed his force.—General Lincoln wounded by the enemy's sharp-shooters.—Effect of the victory on the American arms.—General Fellows's letter to General Lincoln.—Colonel Wilkinson's answer to General Fellows.—Burgoyne breaks up his camp, abandons his hospital, and retreats.—Critical situation of General Fellows.—American army prepare for the pursuit.—Arrival of Mr. J. M. Hayes, a British surgeon, with a flag of truce.—Fac simile of General Burgoyne's letter brought

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by him.—A batteau arrives, under a flag of truce, with Lady Harriet Ackland on board, bearing a letter from General Burgoyne.—Fac simile of that letter.—Reflections on the deportment of the fair sex in moments of severe trial.—Lady H. Ackland's reception by Major Dearborn.—Her arrival at the camp, where she is kindly and respectfully received by General Gates.—A description of her.—American army advances.—British army discovered on the heights above the Fish-kill.—Position taken up by the troops.—General order for the advance of the army.—Wilkinson submits his objection to the General's plan.—Conversation between General Gates and himself on the subject.—Wilkinson falls in with Colonel Morgan's corps, which was retreating after a skirmish with the enemy's picket.—Advises that officer to change his position and promises him support.—Patterson's and Learned's brigades ordered to support him.—Troops ordered to cross the Fish-kill or return to camp.—Wilkinson sends a message to Gen. Gates, urging his presence.—Discovers a reconnoitring party of the enemy.—Orders Capt. Goodale to charge, which he does, and makes an officer and 35 men prisoners.—Fog clears away, and British army is discovered under arms.—Nixon's and Glover's brigade, which had in part crossed the creek, attacked, and give way.—Wilkinson, on his own responsibility, halts two brigades under Colonel Learned, and prevents their being cut to pieces.—The enemy opens a fire upon the two brigades while changing position.—Nixon's and Glover's brigade resume their former positions.—Affairs of pickets, and cannonade on the 12th and 13th.—Letter of Gen. Gates to Gen. Burgoyne.—Narrative of the Baroness of Reidesel.—Appeal to the fair sex of the United States.

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Employment of the hostile armies.

GENERAL Burgoyne having taken the determination to wait the movement of Sir Henry Clinton against Fort Montgomery, turned his attention to the fortification of his camp. The army of General Gates was actively employed in similar labours, and the forest resounded under the strokes of the axe. Nevertheless the inaction

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of General Burgoyne was so opposite to his general character and apparent interests, that although the most desirable circumstance to General Gates, it caused him some perplexity. It was believed he expected succour* from Canada, which was true; and such dispositions were made of our irregulars, as to render their arrival difficult if not impracticable; or he might, as was the fact, be waiting for co-operation from New York; and there was some apprehension, that he intended to transfer his army to the east side of the river, and by forcing a passage with his batteaux, to turn our right flank, though he had made no indication of such a movement. To penetrate any design he might have in that direction, I crossed the river with a detachment, and reconnoitred his left flank closely, but could make no other discovery than that he had thrown up a "*tete de pont*". On my return to camp, I fell in with and captured forty-five armed seamen, who were on a maraud-

Colonel Wilkinson reconnoitres the enemy's left, and makes 45 prisoners.

* Lieutenant Hardin on a scout intercepted Lieutenant Lundie and Ensign M'Martin with a party on their route from Ticonderoga to Gen. Burgoyne's camp, on one of whom the following letter was found.

"*Ticonderoga, Sept. 29th*, 1777.

"Dear Sir,

"I am arrived here: every expedition has been made in my power for the purpose. I felt myself unhappy, and ill used, in my way through Canada; but I shut my chapter of grievances till I see you, which I pray of Heaven may be soon. Brigadier-general Powel will tell you of the dismemberment of my detachment. The taking the 100 of the 8th for the upper posts I suffered with patience, on the supposition that a like number would be substituted in their place below; not conceiving that 4000 troops could be necessary in Canada: but that has not been done. You know my present strength. I wait orders. The chief business of this letter is to suffer the bearer of this to return without delay to procure a number of guides, not only to lead us in the direct military road, but in case of accidents, by any devious path that may bring us to you.

"I have the honour to be, &c.

"BARRY ST. LEGER.

"*P. S.*—I have procured Lieutenant Lundie to be sent with this, as Phillips is too lame to return."

Addressed "*On His Majesty' service—General Burgoyne.*"

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ing party, among the deserted plantations, but could draw no other information from them except that they were attached to the batteaux. Our numbers increased daily, and for want of suitable aliment our sick multiplied proportionably. The accompanying general return [*E*] will exhibit our strength and condition on the 4th of October.

Pending these scenes in the north, the grand army under General Washington in the south had been obliged after the battle of Brandywine, to retire before the superior force of General Sir William Howe, and the commander in chief feeling sensibly the loss of Morgan's corps, which he had generously detached to aid the northern army, made a provisional request for its return. The letters which passed on that subject, will throw some light on the situation of the respective commanders at that interesting epoch. The letter of General Washington bears date the day after Sir William Howe crossed the Schuylkill.

"*Camp near Pottsgrove, Sept. 24th*, 1777.

"Sir,

"This army has not been able to oppose General Howe with the success that was wished, and needs a reinforcement. I therefore request, if you have been so fortunate as to oblige General Burgoyne to retreat to Ticonderoga, or if you have not, and circumstances will admit, that you will order Colonel Morgan to join me again with his corps. I sent him up when I thought you materially wanted him, and if his services can be dispensed with now, you will direct him to return immediately. You will perceive I do not mention this by way of command, but leave you to determine upon it according to your situation; if they come, they should proceed by water from Albany as low down as Peeks-kill: in such case you will give Colonel Morgan the necessary orders to join me with despatch.

"I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

"GO. WASHINGTON.

"*Major-general Gates.*"

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"*Camp, Behmus's Heights, Oct. 5th,* 1777.

"Sir,

"Since the action of the 19th ultimo, the enemy have kept the ground they occupied the morning of that day, and fortified their camp; the advanced sentries* of my pickets are posted within shot of and opposite to the enemy's; neither side have given ground an inch. In this situation, your excellency would not wish me to part with the corps, the army of General Burgoyne are most afraid of. From the best intelligence he has not more than three week's provisions in store; it will take him at least eight days to get back to Ticonderoga; so that in a fortnight at furthest, he must decide, whether he will really risk at infinite disadvantage to force my camp or retreat to his den: in either case, I must have the fairest prospect to be able to reinforce your excellency in a more considerable manner than by a single regiment. I am sorry to repeat to your excellency the distress I have suffered for want of a proper supply of musket cartridges from Springfield, or the materials to make them. The inclosed from the commissary of ordnance stores at Albany, will convince your excellency of the truth of this assertion. My anxiety also on account of provisions, has been inexpressible; a greater error has not been committed this war, than the changing the commissariat in the middle of the campaign. You, Sir, must have your grievances; I therefore will not awaken them by enlarging upon mine.

"I have the honour to be, &c.

"HORATIO GATES."

"*His Excellency Gen. Washington.*"

* This was an unnecessary embellishment, because General Gates had good reason for not parting with Morgan's corps. The pickets of the two armies were more than a mile apart on our left, and three quarters of a mile on our right; of which General Gates might be ignorant, because he never visited them.

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The change in the commissariat to which General Gates alludes, was produced by the act of Congress which determined Colonel Joseph Trumbull to quit the department; a measure of which General Washington foresaw the evil consequences, and which he opposed as far as he consistently could.

The weather in the autumn of 1777, on the Hudson's river, was charming, and the time glided away without any notable occurrence. As early as the blockade of Boston, I had observed that beating to arms frequently produced false alarms, and always hurry; I had therefore prevailed on the General to forbid the practice. Yet on the afternoon of the 7th October, the advanced guard of the centre beat to arms; the alarm was repeated throughout the line, and the troops repaired to their alarm posts. I was at head quarters when this happened, and with the approbation of the General, mounted my horse to inquire the cause; but on reaching the guard where the beat commenced, I could obtain no other satisfaction, but that some person had reported the enemy to be advancing against our left. I proceeded over open ground, and ascending a gentle acclivity in front of the guard, I perceived about half a mile from the line of our encampment, several columns of the enemy, 60 or 70 rods from me, entering a wheat field which had not been cut, and was separated from me by a small rivulet; and without my glass I could distinctly mark their every movement. After entering the field, they displayed, formed the line, and sat down in double ranks with their arms between their legs. Foragers then proceeded to cut the wheat or standing straw, and I soon after observed several officers, mounted on the top of a cabin, from whence with their glasses they were endeavouring to reconnoitre our left, which was concealed from their view by intervening woods.

Having satisfied myself, after fifteen minutes attentive observation, that no attack was meditated, I returned and reported to the General, who asked me what appeared to be the intentions of the enemy. "They are foraging,

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and endeavouring to reconnoitre your left; and I think Sir, they offer you battle." "What is the nature of the ground, and what your opinion?" "Their front is open, and ther flanks rest on woods, under cover of which they may be attacked; their right is skirted by a lofty height. I would indulge them." "Well, then, order on Morgan to begin the game." I waited on the Colonel, whose corps was formed in front of our centre, and delivered the order; he knew the ground, and inquired the position of the enemy: they were formed across a newly cultivated field, their grenadiers with several field pieces on the left, bordering on a wood and a small ravine formed by the rivulet before alluded to; their light infantry on the right, covered by a worm fence at the foot of the hill before mentioned, thickly covered with wood; their centre composed of British and German battalions. Colonel Morgan, with his usual sagacity, proposed to make a circuit with his corps by our left, and under cover of the wood to gain the height on the right of the enemy, and from thence commence his attack, so soon as our fire should be opened against their left; the plan was the best which could be devised, and no doubt contributed essentially to the prompt and decisive victory we gained.

Colonel Morgan ordered to attack the enemy.

This proposition was approved by the General, and it was concerted that time should be allowed the Colonel to make the proposed circuit, and gain his station on the the enemy's right before the attack should be made on their left; Poor's brigade was ordered for this service, and the attack was commenced in due season on the flank and front of the British grenadiers, by the New Hampshire and New York troops. True to his purpose, Morgan at this critical moment poured down like a torrent from the hill, and attacked the right of the enemy in front and flank. Dearborn at the moment, when the enemy's light infantry were attempting to change front, pressed forward with ardour and delivered a close fire; then leapt the fence, shouted, charged and gallantly forced them to retire in disorder; yet headed by that intrepid soldier the Earl of Balcarras, they were immediately

Attack commences.

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rallied and re-formed behind a fence in rear of their first position; but being now attacked with great audacity in front and flanks by superior numbers, resistance became vain, and the whole line, commanded by Burgoyne in person, gave way and made a precipitate and disorderly retreat to his camp, leaving two twelve and six six-pounders on the field with the loss of more than 400 officers and men killed, wounded and captured, and among them the flower of his officers, viz. Brigadier-general Frazer, Major Ackland commanding the grenadiers, Sir Francis Clark,* his first aid-de-camp, Major Williams

* When I returned to head-quarters from the field of battle, I found Sir Francis Clark reposing on General Gates's bed, and those gentlemen engaged in a warm dispute, on the merits of the revolution, Sir Francis admitting that every procedure on our part, short of the declaration of independence, was warranted by the conduct of the British administration; that he had on this ground vindicated us in public and private, but that the sudden act of severance, convinced him the contest had originated in a premeditated view to independence, into which the colonies had been cheated by the puritans of New England; and that he, of consequence, had changed his opinion, and taken part against us. On the other hand, Gates contended, that the idea of disunion had never entered into the head of any American, until the menaces of the parliament, the repeated oppressive acts of the British government, and the manifest vindictive resentment of the sovereign, left the colonists no alternative between abject vassalage and self-government.

The old General became quite incensed, and calling me out of the room, asked me if I had ever heard so impudent a son of a b——h. Sir Francis, who was I think a member of parliament, appeared to be an impetuous, high-minded, frank, fearless fellow, for suddenly changing the conversation he inquired of me, "whether our surgeons were good for any thing, as he did not like the direction of his wound, and was desirous to know whether it was mortal or not?" The following extract of a letter from Dr. Hayes to General Burgoyne, dated the 9th October, describes Sir Francis's particular case. "I have seen Sir Francis Clark, and am sorry to inform you that I form some unfavourable opinion of his case. The ball entered his right flank, struck the two last of the *false ribs*, penetrated the cavity of the abdomen, and seems to run towards the spine; a tension of his belly, and involuntary discharges of urine are bad symptoms. He has been attended with great care and tenderness; I stay by him this night and shall not omit any attention for his recovery. Major Ackland is wounded in the thick

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commanding officer of the artillery, Captain Money deputy quarter-master general, and many others. After delivering the order to General Poor and directing him to the point of attack, I was peremptorily commanded to repair to the rear and order up Ten Broeck's brigade of York militia 3000 strong; I performed this service, and regained the field of battle at the moment the enemy had turned their backs, fifty-two minutes after the first shot was fired. The ground which had been occupied by the British grenadiers presented a scene of complicated horror and exultation. In the square space of twelve or fifteen yards lay eighteen grenadiers in the agonies of death, and three officers propped up against stumps of trees, two of them mortally wounded, bleeding, and almost speechless; what a spectacle for one whose bosom glowed with philanthropy, and how vehement the impulse, which can excite men of sensibility to seek such scenes of barbarism! I found the courageous Colonel Cilley a straddle on a brass twelve-pounder and exulting in the capture—whilst a surgeon, a man of great worth, who

Description of that part of the field of battle occupied by the British grenadiers.

part of *both* legs. The left seems to have the bone touched, but of no consequence." Sir Francis died I think the 13th, and the day before, questioned Doctor Townsend who attended him, as to the probable issue of the wound, the Doctor felt a reluctance in announcing his doom, he observed it, and remarked "Doctor why do you pause? do you think I am afraid to die?" The Doctor then advised him as an act of prudence, to arrange his private affairs, "thank you Doctor," replied he, "I understand you, as to my private affairs, my father settled them for me, and I have only a few legacies to bequeath," among them he gave twenty guineas to the matron of our hospital, who had paid particular attention to him. Some time after the convention, the matron presented her claim to Capt. Money, the British deputy quarter-master general, who discharged it *in continental bills then at a considerable depreciation.* The woman complained of the circumstance, and was recommended to apply to General Burgoyne, who expressed his abhorrence of the act, directed the woman *to hold the continental bills* and obliged Money to atone for the imposition, *by paying the legacy in hard guineas of British coinage, without reference to the sum he had already paid her*, which a due regard to justice and the memory of his much lamented friend would not permit him to consider as the accomplishment of Sir Francis's intention.

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was dressing one of the officers, raising his blood-besmeared hands in a frenzy of patriotism, exclaimed, Wilkinson I have dipt my hands in British blood. He received a sharp rebuke for his brutality, and with the troops I pursued the hard pressed flying enemy, passing over killed and wounded until I heard one exclaim, "protect me Sir, against this boy." Turning my eyes, it was my fortune to arrest the purpose of a lad, thirteen or fourteen years old, in the act of taking aim at a wounded officer who lay in the angle of a worm fence. Inquiring his rank, he answered, "I had the honour to command the grenadiers;" of course, I knew him to be Major Ackland, who had been brought from the field to this place, on the back of a Captain Shrimpton of his own corps, under a heavy fire, and was here deposited, to save the lives of both. I dismounted, took him by the hand and expressed hopes that he was not badly wounded, "not badly," replied this gallant officer and accomplished gentleman, "but very inconveniently, I am shot through both legs; will you Sir have the goodness to have me conveyed to your camp?" I directed my servant to alight, and we lifted Ackland into his seat, and ordered him to be conducted to head-quarters. I then proceeded to the scene of renewed action, which embraced Burgoyne's right flank defence, and extending to his left, crossed a hollow covered with wood, about 40 rods to the entrenchment of the light infantry; the roar of cannon and small arms at this juncture was sublime, between the enemy, behind their works, and our troops entirely exposed, or partially sheltered by trees, stumps, or hollows, at various distances not exceeding 120 yards. This right flank defence of the enemy, occupied by the German corps of Breyman, consisted of a breast-work of rails piled horizontally between perpendicular pickets, driven into the earth, formed *en potence* to the rest of his line, and extended about 250 yards across an open field, and was covered on the right by a battery of two guns. The interval from the left to the British light infantry was committed to the defence of the provincialists, who oc-

Wilkinson falls in with Major Ackland wounded through both legs.

Further description of the action.

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cupied a couple of log cabins. The Germans were encamped immediately behind the rail breast-work, and the ground in front of it declined in a very gentle slope for about 120 yards, when it sunk abruptly; our troops had formed a line under this declivity, and covered breast high were warmly engaged with the Germans. From this position, about sunset, I perceived Brigadier-general Learned advancing towards the enemy with his brigade, in open column, I think with Colonel M. Jackson's regiment in front, as I saw Lieutenant-colonel Brooks, who commanded it, near the General when I rode up to him; on saluting this brave old soldier, he inquired, "where can I *put in* with most advantage." I had particularly examined the ground between the left of the Germans and the light infantry, occupied by the provincialists, from whence I had observed a slack fire; I therefore recommended to General Learned to incline to his right, and attack at that point: he did so with great gallantry; the provincialists abandoned their position and fled; the German flank was by this means uncovered; they were assaulted vigorously, overturned in five minutes, and retreated in disorder, leaving their gallant commander, Lieutenant-colonel Breyman, dead on the field. By dislodging this corps, the whole British encampment was laid open to us; but the extreme darkness of the night, the fatigue of the men, and the disorder incident to undisciplined troops after so desultory an action, put it out of our power to improve the advantage; and in the course of the night General Burgoyne broke up his camp, and retired to his original position, which he had fortified, behind the great ravine.

Statement respecting General Arnold's conduct.

I would not offer injustice even to a traitor, and therefore it is not to derogate from the military merits of General Arnold, that I make the following statement of facts; but it is to rescue from oblivion transactions which have found place in history, under misrepresentations as gross as those which have been imposed on the country, in so many instances during the late war. It must be understood that General Gates had received no

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amicable explanation from General Arnold, subsequent to his letter of the 1st of October, of consequence Arnold found himself without command on the 7th, and it was very natural that an officer of his ambition should, on the commencement of the action, feel irritated by the humiliating situation in which he found himself.

It was remarked, that in the progress of the engagement he rode about the camp betraying great agitation and wrath, and it was said that he was observed to drink freely; at length he was found on the field of battle exercising command, but not by the order or permission of General Gates. His conduct was exceedingly rash and intemperate; and he exposed himself with great folly and temerity, at the time we were engaged front to front with the Germans, and whilst he was flourishing his sword and encouraging the troops, he in a state of furious distraction struck an officer* on the head and wounded him, the first impulse of the officer was to shoot him, for which purpose he raised his fusee, but recollecting himself, he was about to remonstrate, when the General darted off to another part of the field; soon after this incident finding himself on our right, he dashed to the left through the fire† of the two lines and escaped unhurt; he then turned the right of the enemy, as I was informed by that most excellent officer, Colonel Butler,‡ and collecting 15 or 20 riflemen threw himself with this party into the rear of the enemy, just as they gave way, where his leg was broke, and his horse killed under him; but whether by our fire or that of the enemy, as they fled from us, has never been ascertained. It is certain, that he neither rendered service, nor deserved credit on that day, and the wound he received alone saved him from being overwhelmed, by the torrent of General Gates's good fortune and popularity. On such caprices of fortune does the bubble of military

* Believed to be Captain Ball of Major Dearborn's infantry.

† It would be deemed incredible, if General Scott had not performed the same mad prank at Lundy's Lane.

‡ Afterwards General Butler, and killed on the 4th Nov. 1791.

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fame depend! It may be remembered by several who now live, that Arnold rode on that day a black or dark brown horse, the property of Mr. Leonard Chester of Weathersfield, Connecticut, and I recollect observing the body of the horse the morning after, in the rear of the German encampment.

Wilkinson's report and opinion of the enemy's intentions supported by General Burgoyne.

It appears from Burgoyne's despatch to Lord George Germaine, of the 20th Oct. 1777,* that in my report to General Gates on the 7th, I had penetrated the motives of his movement; and I afterwards understood from himself, that in half an hour he should have foraged, finished his observations, and returned to his camp; our attack therefore was most critical, and I trust my enemies may admit, that my agency on the occasion was not prejudicial to the public cause. The following extract from a letter written in haste to the patriot, Governor George Clinton, by order of General Gates, the second day after the action, exhibits a detail of facts too faithful to admit correction, and too explicit to require illustration.

Extract of a letter from an officer of distinction in the army under the command of his excellency General Gates, to the Governor of New York state, dated Camp, Behmus's Heights, Oct. 9th, 1777,—published in Holt's paper.

" Dear Sir,

" General Gates has this moment received a copy of your letter of the 7th instant to the council of safety, and being much engaged, has desired me to tell you, that he condoles with you on the loss of the important post of Fort Montgomery, &c., but congratulates you on the bravery and address of your little garrison. To compensate for this disaster, I have the pleasure to inform you, that we had on the 7th instant an action with General Burgoyne, which reflects the highest honour on our arms, as we carried his encampment and advanced works, took 2 twelve, and 6 six-pounders (brass), with a num-

* See his State of Canada, Appendix, page 83.

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ber of carts and tents, and a considerable quantity of baggage, made prisoners the commanding officers of the artillery and of the British grenadiers, with the General's aid-de-camp, Sir Francis Clark, a quarter-master general, and a number of inferior rank, with about two hundred and fifty non-commissioned officers and privates; the number of the slain, both officers and men, is considerable; among the former is General Fraser. The consequent hurry has prevented a return of our killed and wounded, which I am sensible do not exceed eighty; of the former, we have only one subaltern, and of the latter a few gallant officers. General Burgoyne last night evacuated his camp, leaving behind him upwards of three hundred sick and wounded, among whom are six captains, together with a quantity of flour, &c. and has retreated towards Fort Edward; but as General Gates has taken the precaution to throw about two thousand men in his rear, on the east side of the river, it is probable they will obstruct his retreat, and give us time to come up with him.

"I have the honour to be, &c."

Governor Clinton's conduct contrasted with President Madison's.

The letter from Governor Clinton to the council of safety, referred to in the preceding extract, is worthy a place in these memoirs; it furnishes an admirable contrast to the scenes of Bladensburgh, and may enable the citizens of these states, when the prejudices of faction shall slumber, to compare the merits of George Clinton the sage, the patriot and soldier, with James Madison, whose public and private virtues remain to be discovered, whilst his incompetency and duplicity will be conspicuous, so long as the dishonour attendant upon a conflagrated capital, and the pernicious effects of a national bank shall be felt and remembered; and combined with other testimonials to be found in these sheets, this letter will shew, that whilst the zealous, inflexible, gallant Clinton was supporting the defenders of the state over which he presided in the north, by the exertion of his utmost influence and authority, he was combating the public

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enemy in the south sword in hand; the same documents will prove also, that by the auspicious circumstance of Burgoyne's defeat on the 7th, the object of Sir Henry Clinton's co-operation was baffled, and his enterprize on the 6th was productive of no other public effect, but to incense, excite and unite the inhabitants in defence of their fire-sides and household goods.

"*New Windsor, 7th Oct. 1777.*

"Gentlemen,

"The extreme fatigue I have undergone for three days past, and the want of rest for an equal number of nights, renders me unfit to write you on matters of such serious consequence to this state, as those I have to communicate. I am only able briefly to inform you, that yesterday about ten o'clock A. M. our advanced party was attacked by the enemy at Doodle town, about 2½ miles from Fort Montgomery; our party consisted of about 30 men, the enemy by appearance and subsequent accounts of 5000, nevertheless our men received the enemy's fire, returned it and retreated to Fort Clinton; soon after I received intelligence that the enemy were advancing to the west side of the mountain, with design to attack us in rear.—Upon this I ordered out Lieutenant-colonels Bonyn and M'Cloghray with upwards of 100 men towards Doodletown, and a brass field piece with a detachment of 60 men, to a very advantageous post on the road to the furnace. They were not long out, before they were both attacked by the enemy with their whole force. Our people behaved with spirit and must have made great slaughter of the enemy. I strengthened the party on the furnace road, to upwards of 100, but they were obliged to give way to so superior a force as the enemy brought against them; yet they kept their field piece in full play at them, till the men who worked it were driven off with fixed bayonets, they however spiked it before they quit it, and retreated with great good order to a 12 pounder, which I had ordered to cover them, and from thence into

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the Fort. I immediately posted my men in the most advantageous manner for the defence of the post, and it was not many minutes before we as well as Fort Clinton were attacked on all sides, and a most incessant fire was kept up till night and even after dusk, when the enemy forced our lines and redoubts at both posts, and the garrison's were obliged to fight their way out, as they were determined not to surrender, and many have escaped. I was summoned, when the sun was an hour high, to surrender in five minutes, and thereby prevent the effusion of blood. I sent Lieutenant-colonel Livingston to receive the flag, and the officer who bore it informed him, he had no orders to treat with him unless the garrison meant to surrender themselves prisoners of war, in which case he was empowered to assure them of good usage. This proposition being rejected with scorn, about 10 minutes after, they made a general and desperate attack on both posts, which was resisted with great spirit, but we were at length overpowered by numbers, and they gained possession. Our officers and men displayed much resolution, as well militia as continental troops. Our loss in slain cannot be said to be great, considering the length of the action. My brother General J. Clinton is wounded and I believe made prisoner; this is the case with Major Logan; the number missing I can't ascertain. The ships are both burnt, and Fort Constitution demolished *by our people without my orders, but I can't as yet condemn the measure. The officers all say it was right; I am clear it was as to the Fort, after removing artillery and stores, which has not been done. The ships I hoped might have been saved.* General Putnam will retreat near to Captain Haight's, about 3 miles from Vanwyck, and I mean *to rally my broken but brave force* and *advance to-morrow* to Butter Hill. General Putnam is to send Colonel Webb's regiment to join me. I beg you will give the substance of this account to General Gates in answer to his letters to me. I have only to add that I greatly regret the loss of these posts, but I am consoled with the *full persuasion* that they have *bought them*

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dear and that *I have done the most in my power to save them.* I beg you to excuse incorrectness and am with due respect.

"*N. B.* Major Lush is, I believe, their prisoner.

"Your most obedient,

"GEO. CLINTON.

"*To the Council of the state of New York.*"

The following letter of General Gates is introduced in this place, because it will evince his zeal in the public service, recognise my letter of the 9th, to Governor Clinton and pays a just tribute to the sterling worth of a great man, a valiant soldier and a good citizen.

"*Camp at Saratoga, 13th Oct.* 1777.

"Sir,

"Last night I had the honour to receive your excellency's letter from New Windsor of the 9th instant by express. I had previously wrote an order to Fort Schuyler, directing the commanding officer there, to send Van Schaick's regiment without delay to Albany. I have also desired Brigadier-general Gansevoort to repair forthwith to that city, and take the command of all the troops that may assemble there. I am clearly with you in opinion that should the enemy's General push up the river, your force, in addition to the reinforcements I can give you, acting upon the west side, will so co-operate with General Putnam upon the east side, that Sir H. Clinton will not be able to effect any stroke of consequence; and, perhaps, may finally be as much embarrassed to retreat, as General Burgoyne most visibly appears to be. The two heavy brass twelve pounders taken from the enemy, with a very fine brass train, that I can spare for your succour, will be a good recruit for your artillery. I have already sent down the two Esopus regiments, the Tryon county militia, and most of the militia of Albany county, so that General Gansevoort may be able immediately to form a post; the moment Van Schaick's regiment gets to Albany the cannon shall meet them there. The volunteer militia

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under General Wolcott, mentioned in COLONEL WILKINSON's letter to your excellency of the 9th instant, could not be prevailed upon to go and remain any time in Albany. They were not engaged for any term, and only meant to remain here a few days.

"The very great honour you excellency has acquired by the noble defence of Fort Montgomery, will to the latest posterity adorn the FAMILY OF CLINTON.

"I am, Sir,

"Your excellency's most affectionate,

"And humble servant,

"H. GATES.

"*Governor Clinton.*"

Army takes possession of the enemy's abandoned camp.

On the 8th in the morning the whole army except the camp guards, moved forward and took possession of the enemy's abandoned camp, and the day was spent in the random fire of artillery and small arms; the enemy refusing a flag with which I attempted, at every point of his line, to convey a letter to Lady Harriet Ackland from her husband, a prisoner in our hands. The heights on which Burgoyne had condensed his force were strong by nature and had been improved by art; the great ravine which now covered his front, ran parallel with the entrenchments of his late camp, and several small drains, covered with saplings and brush-wood, emptied their waters into the great ravine from the rear of those intrenchments, the ground in front being an open pine plain; to prevent our encroachment, Burgoyne had lodged his provincials and sharp shooters at the heads of these drains, from whence they continued, the whole day, to annoy every person who crossed their line of vision, and it was from a shot of one of these lurking parties that General Lincoln had his leg broke, late in the day, as he was crossing an indenture of the ground in our front, at a spot where in passing and re-passing with orders in the course of the day, I had been fired at a dozen times, without any apprehension of my danger, it being a long shot and the marksmen concealed.

Description of the ground on which Burgoyne condensed his force.

General Lincoln wounded by the enemy's sharp-shooters.

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The movements in the British camp which could not be concealed, plainly indicated a retreat; but for want of due foresight and seasonable precaution, it was discovered on the evening of the 8th, that the whole army had been without provision since the day before, and our troops exhausted with hunger and fatigue retired to their camp, which had been left standing in the morning; to account for this circumstance, it may be necessary to quote the following extract from the general order of the 4th October, "The whole army to be immediately victualled to the 7th inst. inclusive, with two-thirds fresh and one-third salt provisions, which is to be cooked as soon as possible." The unexpected action of that day had prevented the troops from drawing again according to rule; and the delirium of joy which succeeded the victory, appeared to extinguish the sober reflection of the whole army, and an impatience for the pursuit of a retreating enemy seemed to stifle the claims of nature.

Effect of the victory on the American army.

I had been harassed by an obstinate and wasting disease for several weeks and retired to my pallet on the evening of the 8th, too much enfeebled to employ my pen; in this situation a note from Brigadier-general Fellows,* who had been ordered to cross the river and take post at Saratoga, to General Lincoln who had been badly wounded, was handed to me; on the perusal it occurred to me, that we should not be able to follow Burgoyne until

* Copy of a letter from General Fellows to General Lincoln, dated, Saratoga Barracks, October 8th, 1777.

"Dear Sir,

"I arrived at this post about eleven o'clock in the morning with the whole of the men under my command amounting to about thirteen hundred, and have ordered on the provision, that was collected, at my last post. The men here are very busy in throwing up works to secure themselves in case of an attack. Still I think that it is necessary there should be not less than four thousand men to support this post.

"I remain, Dear Sir,

"Your sincere friend,

(Signed) "JOHN FELLOWS.

"*The Hon. Major-general Lincoln.*"

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the army drew provisions, which would employ the 9th, and that if he retreated that night, which was universally expected, he might fall on Fellows in the morning, and cut him to pieces; to provide against this event, I sent for the deputy quarter-master general, Colonel Udney Hay, and dictated an answer* to General Fellows's letter, which he transcribed in duplicate, and despatched by a confidential express, on each side of the river; in the mean time Burgoyne, as was suspected, actually broke up his camp and began his retreat for Batten Hill, on the east side of the Hudson, intending to ford at Saratoga; but the extreme darkness of the night, the narrowness of the road, and a heavy fall of rain retarded his march, and obliged him to halt at Davocote, two miles short of Saratoga. This was most critical for General Fellows, because I was afterwards informed by Lieutenant-colonel Southerland, of the 47th regiment, who had been sent forward by General Burgoyne to reconnoitre, that he crossed the Fishkill, and directed by General Fellows's fires, who occupied a height beyond, found his camp so entirely unguarded, that he marched round it without being hailed; returned and reported to Burgoyne, and intreated permission to attack Fellows with his regiment alone, but was refused. Had not this rain and other obstructions occurred, Burgoyne must have reach-

Wilkinson despatches an answer to General Fellows.

Burgoyne retreats.

Critical situation of General Fellows.

* "*Head Quarters, Behmus's Heights, 8th Oct.* 1777.

"Dear General,

"Yours from Saratoga barracks of this day just now came to hand. As every motion of the enemy gives us reason to believe they will make a rapid retreat, and the late fatigue our troops have undergone would make it improper to pursue them before morning, the General is of opinion (as there is a possibility of your being overpowered by numbers) that you should recross the river, and use every possible exertion to hinder them from crossing, which if you can effect will give us undoubted opportunity of coming up with, and attacking them to very great advantage. The General, nevertheless, leaves you at full liberty to determine what is best to be done.

"I have the honour to be, &c.

"JAS. WILKINSON, *D. Adj. Gen.*

"*Brigadier-general Fellows.*"

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ed Saratoga before day, in which case Fellows would have been cut up and captured, or dispersed, and Burgoyne's retreat to Fort George would have been unobstructed; but the arrival of my letter on the morning of the 9th, advised Fellows of his danger, and as the front of Burgoyne's army reached Saratoga, the rear of our militia was ascending the opposite bank of Hudson's river, where they took post and prevented its passage.

Whilst these transactions were passing in our front, our army was employed in drawing and cooking provisions, completing ammunition, and equipping themselves for the pursuit. I mounted at daylight on the 9th, and proceeding up the river, passed our advanced guard, and had reached the point where that of the enemy had been stationed, when I observed an individual approaching me on horseback at full gallop, with a white flag raised by his hand, and as he advanced, he held out a letter, which I received and read, and now offer a fac simile [a] of it, in commemoration of the occasion. The bearer appeared in much trepidation, and announced to me the facetious, amiable Hibernian, John Macnamara Hayes,* informing me at the same time, that he had been left in charge of many sick and wounded officers and men, whom he intreated me to visit, as they were in great alarm for their personal safety against our Indians and riflemen. I accompanied him, and after examining his hospital tents, where I found about three hundred men comfortably accommodated, I was introduced to the officers,† who occupied Sword's house; and persuade myself, those of them who live will bear in memory, the heart cheering consolation which I gave them, by the assurance of protection in their persons and property, under a safeguard of rifle-

Mr. Hayes, the British surgeon, presents himself with a flag of truce.

* Since Sir John M. Hayes, and an eminent practitioner in London.

† Names of officers recommended by General Burgoyne to the protection of General Gates: 20th regt. Captains Richard Dowlin, William Stanley, William Farquhar, Lieutenant James Dowlin, and Ensign Morgan Conner;—21st regt. Captain the Hon. Malcolm Ramsey, Lieutenant Richard Rutland;—Berner's Chasseurs, Captain Van Glysenburgh, Lieutenant Brodie.

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y hospitals ~~&c~~ makes
e wounded & sick officers
lemp that to transport
mend them to the
shew to our enemy

most Humble Servant

J. Burgoyne

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In

Lady Harriot Acklond, a Lady of the
first distinction by family rank & by personal virtues,
[illegible] concern on account of Major Ackland.

M. S. Gales.

men, and of every comfort in the power of the American general to bestow.

The exertions of the two preceding days, appeared on the 9th, to have appalled the energy of the troops; the weather was unfavourable, the commissariat dilatory, and the men seemed to prefer repose to action. Disease made me impatient, and I freely expressed my chagrin at the delay to General Gates, who consoled me with his approbation of my conduct and thanks for my services. The day wasted without a movement to the front, excepting parties of observation, and the night found us on our old ground. About 10 o'clock I was advised from the advanced guard on the river, that a batteau under a flag of truce had arrived from the enemy, with a lady on board, who bore a letter to Gen. Gates from Gen. Burgoyne, of which I shall here record a fac simile, [*b*] in honour of the sensibility which dictated it, and as a testimony of that supreme degree of fortitude, resignation, constancy and affection, which is most frequently discovered under the most tender forms; and I will add from my own observation, and I do it with lively satisfaction, that in the exercise of those duties and those virtues which ornament and sweeten the married life; in every trial of adversity, the fair and feeble sex shew themselves superior to the lordly animals of the creation, and furnish examples of tranquil firmness and resolution to their protectors.

Major Henry Dearborn,* who commanded the guard, was ordered to detain the flag until the morning; the night being exceedingly dark, and the quality of the lady unknown. As this incident has been grossly misrepresented to the injury of the American character, which in arms is that of courage, clemency and humanity; to correct the delusions which have flowed from General Burgoyne's pen, who although the vehicle, could not have been the author, of the calumny—I am authorised by General Dearborn to make the following statement, in which I place entire confidence. His guard occupied a cabin,

* Late Major-general Dearborn.

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in which there was a back apartment appropriated to his own accommodation: the party on board the boat attracted the attention of the sentinel, and he had not hailed ten minutes, before she struck the shore; the lady was immediately conveyed into the apartment of the Major, which had been cleared for her reception; her attendants followed with her bedding and necessaries, a fire was made, and her mind was relieved from the horrors which oppressed it, by the assurance of her husband's safety; she took tea, and was accommodated as comfortably as circumstances would permit, and the next morning when I visited the guard before sunrise, her boat had put off, and was floating down the stream to our camp, where

Lady H. Ackland is received by General Gates.

General Gates, whose gallantry will not be denied, stood ready to receive her with all the tenderness and respect to which her rank and condition gave her a claim: indeed the feminine figure, the benign aspect, and polished manners of this charming woman, were alone sufficient to attract the sympathy of the most obdurate; but if another motive could have been wanting to inspire respect, it was furnished by the peculiar circumstances of Lady Harriet, then in that most delicate situation, which cannot fail to interest the solicitudes of every being possessing the form and feelings of a man: it was therefore the foulest injustice to brand an American officer with the failure of courtesy, where it was so highly merited. Major Ackland had set out for Albany, where he was joined by his lady.

British army discovered entrenched on the heights above the Fish-kill.

The 9th passed without other casualty than the reception of fifty or sixty Germans, who deserted from the enemy, and from whom their situation was well understood. The morning of the 10th found the troops still deficient in provisions; it rained, and the army did not march until the afternoon: our front reached Saratoga about four o'clock, where we discovered the British army encamped on the heights beyond the Fish-kill, General Fellows's corps on the opposite bank of the river, and the batteaux of the enemy at the mouth of the creek, with a fatigue party busily employed unloading and conveying

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their contents across the plain to the heights. The commanding officer of artillery, Major Stevens, gallant, vigilant, and ready to improve every advantage, ran a couple of light pieces* down on the plain near the river, and opened a battery upon the batteaux and working party at the landing, which soon dispersed it; but he drew the fire of the enemy's whole park upon him from the heights, which obliged him to retire after the loss of a tumbril, which was blown up by a shot from the enemy, and caused a shout from the whole British army.

The army took a position in the wood on the heights, in several lines, their right resting on the brow of the hill, about a mile in rear of the Fish-kill, Colonel Morgan being in front and near the church. I made it my invariable duty personally to see the guards and pickets of the night posted. Having performed this service, I returned to the General's quarters about 11 o'clock, which I found in a small hovel, about ten feet square, at the foot of the hill, out of which it had been partially dug; the floor had been prepared by nature: in one corner four forks with cross pieces, supported the boards which received the General's pallet, and in another some clean straw and a pair of blankets, with my saddle for a pillow, furnished me a comfortable birth. On entering I found a candle burning on a small camp table, and the General awake. He called my attention to an order which lay upon the table. I do not find this order recorded in my orderly book, but it was of the following effect: "*The army will advance at reveille to-morrow morning, Morgan's corps to keep the heights on the left, and the main body to march on the great road near the river.*" I could not approve of this movement, and the General required my objections. I was of opinion, "that he would commit himself to the enemy in their strong position."

General order for the advance of the army.

* The late Colonel Freeman of the artillery, was then a subaltern, and served one of those pieces; his length of service, in the opinion of President Madison, gave him a claim to a discharge, and he was accordingly at the late derangement thrown aside as useless lumber.

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He replied, "that they were already on the retreat, and would be miles ahead of us before morning." I answered, "that he had no assurance of this, and that I had just left their guards on post;" and went on to observe, "that with submission I conceived we ought to reconoitre, before the army marched; because should we, contrary to his calculation, explore our way through a dense fog,* and fall in with the enemy posted behind their intrenchments, the consequences might be destructive." These observations appeared to have weight with the General, and he ordered me to rise early to attend to the movement, and report to him; but he would not give up the opinion that the enemy had retreated, and observed "it was natural that they should sacrifice guards to conceal their movements."

Wilkinson sets off to reconnoitre, and meets Colonel Morgan retiring.

I was on horseback before reveille, and rode directly to Colonel Morgan's position, a mile in advance; but before I reached it he had decamped, and with some difficulty had crossed the Fish-kill on a raft of loose logs, at the foot of a mill pond about three-fourths of a mile above the Saratoga mills. I forded the creek at a deep and rapid ford just below the dam, and as I mounted the opposite bank, heard several shot in my front; the fog as usual being so thick that I could not distinguish objects at twenty paces. I pressed forward in the direction of the sound, and soon fell in with our elite, which had recoiled; and was informed by Colonel Morgan, that he was advancing agreeably to orders, and had fallen in with a picket of the enemy, by whose fire he had lost an officer (a Lieutenant Harrison I think,) and two privates. He was of opinion, the main body of the enemy had not moved, but could not ascertain the fact; he knew the creek was in his rear, disliked his situation, and was desirous to change it, but was a stranger to the ground. I had examined it during the retreat of the army in August, and knew that a turn of the creek would render his situation critical, in case the enemy should press him. I

* Fogs were invariable every morning, except when it rained.

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therefore advised him to incline to his left, and throw his corps into air, and promised to support him with two brigades. I hastened to head quarters, reported to the General, and received instructions to order Patterson's and Learned's brigades to support Morgan. Having performed this duty, and conducted General Learned* across the creek, I returned to the main column in the road, which had halted near the termination of the sharp ridge on the left, between the church and General Schuyler's house; I found Brigadier-generals Nixon and Glover and Major Stevens at the head of the troops. On inquiring the cause of the halt, Glover observed they were waiting for guides to conduct them across the creek. I proffered my services, and at this instant Major Pierce, an aid-de-camp of General Gates, rode up to me, to say from the General, "that the troops must immediately cross the creek, or return to their camp." I felt the critical importance of the movement we were making in the dark, for the fog still continued; I feared the consequences, trembled for my general, and was vexed at his absence. In this tumult of the passions, I returned an hasty answer: "Tell the General, that his own fame and the interests of the cause are at hazard; that his presence is necessary with the troops." As I led off the column Major Stevens offered to accompany me, and we proceeded towards the ford, between the mills and the site of old Fort Lawrence, near the mouth of the creek, followed by an advanced guard of fifty men, under the command of, I think, Captain Goodale† of Putnam's regiment, the fog being still exceeding thick; we were directed by a path to the ford, and entered the creek some distance ahead of the guard; our horses had halted to drink, and in leaning down on the neck of my own, I cast my eyes up

Troops ordered to cross the Fish-kill, or return to camp.

* He was junior to Patterson, but the latter was general officer of the day, and therefore Learned commanded the two brigades, as both the major-generals were wounded.

† This gallant soldier, and virtuous citizen, migrated to the Ohio after the peace, settled near Belpré, and was murdered by the Indians.

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to the opposite bank, and through the fog discovered a party of men in motion. I whispered to my companion; we gently reined up our horses, and turned about, a ripple in the water concealing the noise of our movement. Goodale had just approached the bank of the creek: I directed him to the enemy, and ordered him to charge, which he did with resolution, and rushing upon them before they discovered him, he took a reconnoitring party of a subaltern and thirty-five men, without a shot, from whom I learnt the army of the enemy were on post. The front of the column had by this time crossed the creek, the General was a mile off, and I had no authority to check the movement; twelve or fifteen hundred men had passed, when the fog was suddenly dispersed, and we beheld the British army under arms; their park in our front, and our left exposed to their centre; a heavy fire of artillery and small arms was immediately opened on us, and our troops unexpectedly attacked in flank and front, broke and retreated over the creek in great disorder. A standing order had been issued the day before, with a view to the most prompt co-operation of our whole force, viz. "*That in case of an attack against any point, whether front, flank or rear, the troops are to fall on the enemy at all quarters.*" We had not yet heard from the corps of General Learned, and it occurred to me, that, deceived by the firing on our right, he might be led into a disadvantageous attack. I instantly clapped spurs to my horse, crossed the creek at the ford below the mill dam, and reached the front of the two brigades, at about two hundred yards from Burgoyne's strongest post, on the crown of the hill west of the creek, which was occupied by the grenadiers, light infantry, and other corps. The troops were advancing by files from the right of platoons, and had just entered the ground which had been cleared off by the enemy, in front of their retrenchment, which was abbatised. If I had been three minutes later, our left wing would have been engaged under every disadvantage, at the time the right had given way, and the consequences might have been calamitous. I found General

Wilkinson discovers a party of the enemy.

British army is discovered under arms.

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Learned near the centre, and begged him to halt, which was immediately done, by passing the word to the right and left. I then observed to him, that "he must retreat." He asked me, "Have you orders?" I answered him, "I have not, as the exigency of the case did not allow me time to see General Gates." He observed, "Our brethren are engaged on the right, and the standing order is to *attack*." I informed him "our troops on the right have retired, and the fire you hear is from the enemy;" and I added, "although I have no orders for your retreat, I pledge my life for the General's approbation." By this time several field officers had joined us, and among them I remember Lieutenant-colonels Brooks* and Tupper, who approved the proposition, and General Learned accorded: it then became a question how we should retire, and it was agreed as the most prompt and least exposed movement, to come to the right about, and march by the left. The enemy were watching our motions with shouldered arms; and the moment the troops came about, they opened upon us with their artillery and small arms, and killed an officer and several men, before we were masked by the wood. The two brigades fell back about half a mile to a field, where they took a strong position, which they fortified and held until the surrender of the British army: Morgan's corps being on their left, and extended in rear of the enemy's right: the brigades of Glover and Nixon after their repulse resumed their positions on the heights west of the great road; and the remainder of the 11th and the whole of the 12th and 13th passed without any notable occurrence, except affairs of pickets and several brisk cannonades, unless the augmentation of our militia force from all quarters, and the following correspondence between General Gates and General Burgoyne, may be so considered.

Wilkinson halts Colonel Learned's brigade on his own authority.

Enemy open their fire upon the two brigades while changing position.

* Governor of Massachusetts.

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"*Saratoga, Oct. 12th, 1777.*

"Sir,

"I had the honour to receive your excellency's letter by Lady Ackland. The respect due to her ladyship's rank, the tenderness due to her person and sex, were alone sufficient recommendations, to entitle her to my protection; and considering my preceding conduct, with respect to those of your army, whom the fortune of war has placed in my hands, I am surprised your excellency, should think, that I could consider the greatest attention to Lady Ackland in the light of an obligation.

"The cruelties which mark the retreat of your army, in burning the gentlemens' and farmers' houses as it passed along, is almost, among civilised nations, without precedent; they should not endeavour to ruin those they could not conquer; their conduct betrays more of the vindictive malice of a monk than the generosity of a soldier.

"Your friend Sir Francis Clark, by the information of Doctor Potts, the director-general of my hospital, languishes under a very dangerous wound, every sort of tenderness and attention is paid to him, as well as to all the wounded, who have fallen into my hands, and the hospital which you was necessitated to leave to my mercy.

"At the solicitation of Major Williams, I am prevailed upon to offer him and Major Milborn in exchange for Colonel Ethan Allen. Your objections to my last proposals for the exchange of Colonel Ethan Allen, I must consider as trifling, as I cannot but suppose that the Generals of the Royal Armies act in equal concert, with those of the Generals of the Armies of the United States.

"The bearer delivers a number of letters from the officers of your army, taken prisoners in the action of the 7th instant.

"I am, Sir, &c.

(Signed) "HORATIO GATES.

"*General Burgoyne.*"

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"*Saratoga, Oct. 12th*, 1777.

"Lieutenant-general Burgoyne presents his compliments to Major-general Gates, and will send an answer to his letter with the officers' baggage as soon as possible."

I shall conclude this chapter with the following extract from a narrative published in the German language at Berlin, in 1800. It is from the pen of the amiable, the accomplished and dignified Baroness Reidesel, whose charming blue eyes, I have more than once seen bedewed with tears at the recital of her sufferings. This lady with two infant children accompanied her husband Major-general the Baron Reidesel from Germany to England, from England to Canada, and from the last place to the termination of General Burgoyne's campaign, in which she suffered more than the horrors of the grave in their most frightful aspect; an imperfect translation does not render justice to the style of Madam Reidesel, but the artless interesting tale furnishes strong proof of its authenticity. I trust I shall be pardoned for presenting it to my fair readers, and whilst it serves to explain and wind up some of the distressing scenes, which were passing in the enemy's camp, at and after the actions I have been describing, it furnishes a glimpse of the horrors of war. I trust it may warn my charming countrymen against the miseries, to which the highly accomplished authoress, and her interesting friend and fellow sufferer, Lady Harriet Ackland, were so imminently exposed. Would to heaven that it might produce another effect, which I consider vitally essential to the permanent tranquillity of these states; were my honoured countrywomen to consult patriot duty and personal happiness, they would avert their eyes from and shut their ears to

"The neighing steed and the loud trump,
"The spirit stirring drum, and the shrill fife,
"The royal banner, and all quality,
"Pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war."

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And then no more would exterior trappings and a flippant air, seduce the heart from the contemplation of the social virtues, of improved understanding and refined sensibility; robbed of their PRAISE and their PATRONAGE, the overwhelming thirst for military glory would be allayed, and excellence in the more solid and useful pursuits of civil life, would excite the rivalry of the rising generation; and the great cause of morality and religion would be promoted, to support the constitution of our country; and to the honour of the American fair it might be said, that they tamed

"————— the spirit of wild war,
"That like a lion fostered up at hand,
"It may lie gently at the foot of peace."

Extract from the Baroness Reidesel's Narrative.

"As we had to march still further, I ordered a large calash to be built capable of holding my three children, myself and two female servants, in this manner we moved with the army in the midst of the soldiery who were very merry, singing songs and panting for action. We had to travel through almost impassable woods and a most picturesque and beautiful country, which was abandoned by its inhabitants who had repaired to the standard of General Gates; they added much to his strength, as they were all good marksmen and fitted by habit for the species of warfare, the contending parties were then engaged in—and the love of their country inspired them with more than ordinary courage. The army had shortly to encamp: I generally remained about an hour's march in the rear, where I received daily visits from my husband; the army was frequently engaged in small affairs, but nothing of importance took place; and as the season was getting cold, Major Williams of the artillery proposed to have a house built for me with a chimney, observing that it would not cost more than 5 or 6 guineas, and that the frequent change of quarters was very inconvenient to me, it was accordingly built, and was called the Block house,

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from its square form and the resemblance it bore to those buildings.

"On the 19th September an affair happened, which, although it turned out to our advantage, yet obliged us to halt at a place called Freeman's farm; I was an eye witness to the whole affair, and as my husband was engaged in it, I was full of anxiety and trembled at every shot I heard; I saw a great number of the wounded, and what added to the distress of the scene, three of them were brought into the house in which I took shelter; one was a Major Harnage of the 62d British regiment, the husband of a lady of my acquaintance, another was a Lieutenant married to a lady, with whom I had the honour to be on terms of intimacy, and the third was an officer of the name of Young.

"In a short time afterwards I heard groans proceeding from a room near mine, and knew they must have been occasioned by the sufferings of the last mentioned officer, who lay writhing in his wounds.

"His mournful situation interested me much, and the more so, because the recollection of many polite attentions, received from a family of that name during my visit to England, was still forcibly impressed on my mind. I sent to him and begged him to accept my best services, and afterwards furnished him with food and refreshments; he expressed a great desire to see me, politely calling me his benefactress. I accordingly visited him, and found him lying on a little straw, as he had lost his equipage. He was a young man 18 or 19 years of age, and really the beloved nephew of the Mr. Young, the head of the family I have mentioned, and the only son of his parents. This last circumstance was what he lamented most, as to his pain he thought lightly of it. He had lost much blood, and it was thought necessary to amputate the leg, but this he would not consent to, and of course a mortification took place. I sent him cushions and coverings, and my female friends sent him a mattress. I redoubled my attention to him and visited him every day, for which I received a thousand wishes for my

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happiness. At last his limb was amputated, but it was too late, and he died the following day. As he lay in the next room to me, and the partition was very thin, I distinctly heard his last sigh, when his immortal part quitting its frail tenement, and I trust, winged its way to the mansions of eternal bliss.

"But severe trials awaited us, and on the 7th October our misfortunes began; I was at breakfast with my husband, and heard that something was intended. On the same day I expected Generals Burgoyne, Phillips and Fraser to dine with us. I saw a great movement among the troops; my husband told me, it was merely a reconnoissance, which gave me no concern as it often happened. I walked out of the house and met several Indians in their war dresses, with guns in their hands. When I asked them where they were going, they cried out War! War! (meaning that they were going to battle.) This filled me with apprehension, and I had scarcely got home, before I heard reports of cannon and musketry which grew louder by degrees, till at last the noise became excessive. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon, instead of the guests whom I expected, General Fraser was brought on a litter mortally wounded. The table, which was already set, was instantly removed, and a bed placed in its stead for the wounded General. I sat trembling in a corner; the noise grew louder and the alarm increased; the thought that my husband might perhaps be brought in, wounded in the same manner, was terrible to me, and distressed me exceedingly. General Fraser said to the surgeon, "*tell me if my wound is mortal, do not flatter me.*" The ball had passed through his body, and unhappily for the General, he had eaten a very hearty breakfast, by which the stomach was distended, and the ball, as the surgeon said, had passed through it. I heard him often exclaim with a sigh, "OH FATAL AMBITION! POOR GENERAL BURGOYNE! OH MY POOR WIFE!" He was asked if he had any request to make, to which he replied, that "IF GENERAL BURGOYNE WOULD PERMIT IT, HE SHOULD LIKE TO BE BURIED AT 6 O'CLOCK IN THE EVEN-

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ING ON THE TOP OF A MOUNTAIN, IN A REDOUBT WHICH HAD BEEN BUILT THERE." I did not know which way to turn, all the other rooms were full of sick. Towards evening I saw my husband coming, then I forgot all my sorrows and thanked God that he was spared to me. He ate in great haste with me and his aid-de-camp behind the house. We had been told that we had the advantage of the enemy, but the sorrowful faces I beheld told a different tale, and before my husband went away he took me on one side, and said every thing was going very bad, that I must keep myself in readiness to leave the place, but not to mention it to any one. I made the pretence that I would move the next morning into my new house, and had every thing packed up ready.

"Lady H. Ackland had a tent not far from our house, in this she slept, and the rest of the day she was in the camp. All of a sudden, a man came to tell her that her husband was mortally wounded and taken prisoner; on hearing this she became very miserable, we comforted her by telling her, that the wound was only slight, and at the same time advised her to go over to her husband, to do which she would certainly obtain permission, and then she could attend him herself; she was a charming woman and very fond of him. I spent much of the night in comforting her, and then went again to my children whom I had put to bed. I could not go to sleep, as I had General Fraser and all the other wounded gentlemen in my room, and I was sadly afraid my children would awake and by their crying, disturb the dying man in his last moments, who often addressed me and apologised *"for the trouble he gave me."* About 3 o'clock in the morning I was told he could not hold out much longer; I had desired to be informed of the near approach of this sad crisis, and I then wrapped up my children in their clothes, and went with them into the room below. About 8 o'clock in the morning *he died.* After he was laid out and his corpse wrapped up in a sheet, we came again into the room, and had this sorrowful sight before us the whole day, and to add to the melancholy scene, almost every moment some

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officer of my acquaintance was brought in wounded. The cannonade commenced again; a retreat was spoken of, but not the smallest motion was made towards it. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon I saw the house which had just been built for me in flames, and the enemy was now not far off. We knew that General Burgoyne would not refuse the last request of General Fraser, though by his acceding to it, an unnecessary delay was occasioned, by which the inconvenience of the army was much increased. At 6 o'clock the corpse was brought out, and we saw all the Generals attend it to the mountain; the chaplain, Mr. Brudenell, performed the funeral service, rendered unusually solemn and awful from its being accompanied by constant peals from the enemy's artillery. Many cannon balls flew close by me, but I had my eyes directed towards the mountain,* where my husband was standing, amidst the fire of the enemy, and of course, I could not think of my own danger.

"General Gates afterwards said, that if he had known it had been a funeral he would not have permitted it to be fired on."

* The height occupied by Burgoyne on the 18th, which ran parallel with the river until it approached General Gates's camp.

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CHAPTER VIII.

CHAP. VIII.

Communication between General Burgoyne and General Gates.—Colonel Wilkinson meets the British major, Kingston, at the advanced posts, and conducts him to head quarters.—His introduction to General Gates.—Proves to be an old acquaintance.—Reads a message from General Burgoyne, and receives General Gates's proposals in return.—Conversation which ensued.—He is escorted back to the advanced post.—Colonel Wilkinson suggests to General Gates the advantage he has given the enemy, by being first to name the grounds of surrender.—General Gates's reply.—Major Kingston returns with a flag.—Counter-proposals made by General Burgoyne, and assented to by General Gates.—Colonel Wilkinson and General Whipple appointed to meet Lieutenant-colonel Sutherland and Colonel Craig, to draw up a convention.—They form articles, which are approved by their respective generals.—Captain Craig's letter of the 15th to Colonel Wilkinson, with his answer.—General Burgoyne's message of the 16th to General Gates.—Wilkinson authorised to answer it.—Meets Generals Burgoyne, Phillips, Reidesel, Hamilton, Gall and Specht.—High military characters of the British officers, contrasted with Wilkinson's inexperience.—Conversation between General Burgoyne and Colonel Wilkinson.—The truce dissolved.—Wilkinson retires.—Is recalled.—General Burgoyne asks time to consult his officers.—This is granted.—Wilkinson waits the result at the American picket.—A messenger from General Gates, by whom he transmits a brief account of his proceedings.—The truce expires.—The British Lieutenant-colonel Sutherland crosses the creek.—Conversation between him and Wilkinson.—He returns with Captain Craig's letter.—Impatience of General Gates at the delay.—Convention is signed, with an additional article,

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specifically including General Burgoyne.—Wilkinson presents the convention to General Gates, who assents to the additional article.—The convention and field return of the forces which surrendered.—Reflections on the convention.—Intended operations of the enemy, in the event of the convention not being signed.—Meeting between Generals Burgoyne and Gates.—His staff is introduced to the latter.—Wilkinson, sinking under disease, is conveyed to Albany.—In this state is despatched to Congress, with the convention.—General Gates's letter to President Hancock, of 18th Nov. 1777.—Wilkinson proceeds on his journey.—Reaches Easton, where he meets Dr. Shippen and Mrs. ———, and has a conversation respecting General Conway's letter.—His interview with General Mifflin at Reading.—Conway's letter again mentioned.—Arrives at Congress, and delivers his despatches.—Has an audience of that honourable body.—Perceives a disposition in certain members to depreciate the importance of the convention.—Determines to defeat their plan.—Frames a message from General Gates to Congress, which he delivers with sundry documents to the house.—Receives the brevet of brigadier-general.—Sets out to the grand army.—Calls at Reading, and spends some days there.—Character of Edward Biddle, esq. and of Alexander Graydon.—Visits the camp at White Marsh.—Reception by General Washington.—Interview with General Conway.—Narrative of the Baroness Reidesel continued.

CHAP. VIII.

RETURNING to our hovel on the night of the 13th, after posting the guards, the General, who had been asleep, awoke, and desired me to read the following notes.

Correspondence between General Gates and General Burgoyne.

"*October 13th*, 1777.

"Lieutenant-general Burgoyne is desirous of sending a field officer to Major-general Gates, upon a matter of high moment to both armies. The Lieutenant-general requests to be informed at what time General Gates will receive him to-morrow morning.

"*Major-general Gates*,"

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"*Camp at Saratoga*, 9 *o'clock, P. M.*
"*Oct.* 13*th*, 1777.

"Major-general Gates will receive a field officer from Lieutenant-general Burgoyne, at the advanced post of the army of the United States, at 10 o'clock to-morrow morning, from whence he will be conducted to head quarters.

"*Lieutenant-general Burgoyne.*"

After the perusal of them, I asked him whether he had not condescended improperly in agreeing to receive the deputy of his adversary at his head quarters, within his guards, and between the lines of his army? After a minute's reflection he replied, "You are right, young man; I was hasty; but what's to be done?" "I will meet the flag," said I, "and endeavour to draw the message from the officer; but if he claims your engagement, he must be admitted." "Agreed," said he, "do so;" and at the hour appointed I repaired to the advanced post, accompanied by Mr. Henry Livingston,* of the Upper Manor on the Hudson's river. The bridge across the Fish-kill had been destroyed, but the sleepers remained. We did not wait many minutes before the chamade was beat at the advanced guard of the enemy, and an officer descending the hill, stepped across the creek on one of the sleepers of the late bridge; it was "Major Kingston, with a message from Lieutenant-general Burgoyne to Major-general Gates." I named to him "Colonel Wilkinson, on the part of General Gates, to receive the message." He paused a moment, pulled out a paper, looked at it, and observed, "My orders direct me to Major-general Gates." "It is to save time and trouble that I am authorised to receive the message you bear." He then took General Gates's note to General Burgoyne from his pocket, read it, and said "General Gates has agreed to receive the message, and I am not authorised to deliver

Wilkinson meets the British Major Kingston at the advanced post.

* Since a major-general of the militia of New York.

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it to any other person." "Well then, Sir, you must submit to be hood-winked." He affected to start at the proposition, and objected, on the ground of its being an indignity: I could but smile at the expression, and observed, that "I had understood there was nothing more common, than to blindfold military messengers, when they were admitted within the walls of a place, or the guards of a camp." He replied, "Well, Sir, I will submit to it, but under the express stipulation, that no indignity is intended to the British arms." I then carefully bound up his eyes with his own handkerchief; he took my arm, and in this way we walked upwards of a mile to head quarters. Major Kingston appeared to be about forty; he was a well formed, ruddy, handsome man, and expatiated with taste and eloquence on the beautiful scenery of the Hudson's river, and the charms of the season: when I introduced him into General Gates's tent, and named him, the gentlemen saluted each other familiarly, with "General Gates, your servant,"—"Ah! Kingston, how do you do?" and a shake of the hand. Being seated a few minutes, he arose and observed he had certain communications to make Major-general Gates from Lieutenant-general Burgoyne, and to guard against inaccuracy of memory, he had committed them to paper, and with permission would read them. The General consented, and the Major took from his pocket and read.

Reads his message from General Burgoyne.

Memorandum of a Message delivered by Major Kingston, from Lieutenant-general Burgoyne to Major-general Gates.

"The General from a great deal of business did not yesterday answer your letter about the officers, but intended it.

"In regard to the reproaches made upon this army of burning the country, they are unjust; General Schuyler's house and adjacent buildings remained protected till General Gates's troops approached the Ford, General Bur-

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goyne avows the order for setting fire at *that time* to every thing that covered the movement. CHAP VIII.

"The barracks particularly took fire by mere accident, and measures were taken, though ineffectual, to save them. If there has been any vindictive spirit in burning other buildings on the march, it has probably been employed by some secret well-wishers to the American cause, as General Burgoyne has been informed some of the buildings belonged to supposed friends of the king. The General does not think that General Gates has a right, from any thing that has appeared in his conduct or reasoning, to make use of the term TRIFLING; and he still persists, that he cannot interfere with the prisoners in General Howe's army, and more especially in a case that has been under negociation between General Howe and General Washington."

He added that General Gates would perceive this was an answer to his letter of the 12th, and that the other paper to which he claimed the General's attention was of a very different nature; he then offered the following propositions.

"I am directed to represent to you from General Burgoyne, that after having fought you twice, he has waited some days in his present position determined to try a third conflict against any force you could bring to attack him.

"He is apprised of the superiority of your numbers, and the disposition of your troops to impede his supplies and render his retreat a scene of carnage on both sides. In this situation he is impelled by humanity, and thinks himself justified by established principles and precedents of state and of war, to spare the lives of brave men upon honourable terms; should Major-general Gates be inclined to treat upon that idea, General Burgoyne would propose a cessation of arms, during the time necessary to communicate the preliminary terms, by which in any extremity he and army mean to abide."

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CHAP. VIII.

General Gates delivers his proposals for General Burgoyne's surrender.

So soon as he had finished, to my utter astonishment, General Gates put his hand to his side pocket, pulled out a paper, and presented it to Kingston, observing "*There, Sir, are the terms on which General Burgoyne must surrender.*" The Major appeared thunderstruck, but read the paper, whilst the old chief surveyed him attentively through his spectacles. Having finished the perusal of the propositions of General Gates, Major Kingston appeared exceedingly mortified, and said to the General, "I must beg leave to decline delivering this paper to Lieutenant-general Burgoyne, because, although I cannot presume to speak for him, I think the propositions it contains cannot be submitted to." The General observed that he might be mistaken, and that there could be no impropriety in his delivering them. Kingston requested they might be sent by one of his own officers, which the General declined, and remarked, "*that as he had brought the message, he ought to take back the answer;*" to which the Major reluctantly consented, took leave, and I again filletted him, and at his request conducted him to our advanced guard. Very different was his conversation in returning: he complained of General Gates's propositions, to which I was still a perfect stranger; talked of the pride and spirit of his army, and called my recollection to the feats performed by *six British regiments at the battle of Minden.* I felt for his chagrin, and said nothing to increase it; and having passed him beyond our guards, I hastened back to head quarters, filled with uneasiness by the course which General Gates had adopted.

As soon as I returned, I yielded to the prescriptions of duty and affection, and inquired of the General whether "he had not given Burgoyne an advantage, by not waiting to receive his overtures, before he presented his own terms?" He could see none. I then inquired "whether he meant, in any extremity, to recede from the propositions he had made?" He admitted that he did, and would relax a great deal to get possession of the enemy's arms. I did not venture to oppose my inexperience to

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his knowledge, but observed, "that in the capitulations of Cape Breton, Quebec, Montreal, and other places, which I had read, the propositions were made by the besieged, and were granted, modified, or refused, by the besiegers, at their discretion; but that having offered conditions by which he did not mean to abide, I was fearful Burgoyne would dictate the terms of surrender." After musing some time, he clapped me on the shoulder, and exclaimed with much complacency and affection, "Wilky,* you are right again; but it is done, and we must make the most of it; I shall be content to get the arms out of their hands."

General Gates's observations in reply.

About sun-set the same day it was notified to me that a flag waited at the advanced guard, and I proceeded to receive it. I again met Major Kingston, who presented another message from Lieutenant-general Burgoyne to Major-general Gates, accompanied by the propositions of the latter, which had been transmitted by Major Kingston, and the answers of the former annexed, together with the preliminary articles, proposed by General Burgoyne, which were substantially assented to by General Gates, and thus my apprehensions were verified. Burgoyne made his own convention, and saved his accoutrements, military chest,† and colours,‡ all of which were retained

Major Kingston returns with the counter proposals of General Burgoyne, to which General Gates assents.

* A familiar designation fixed on me at Ticonderoga, in 1776, by that excellent officer, my friend Colonel Matt. Ogden, of the Jerseys.

† *Examination of Colonel Kingston, deputy adjutant-general of Lieutenant Burgoyne's army before the House of Commons.*

"*Question.*—What became of the rest of the money in the military chest?

"*Answer.*—It was taken by the paymaster-general to Albany.

"*Question.*—Did any part of it fall into the hands of the enemy?

"*Answer.*—Not a shilling that I ever heard of."

‡ *Extract from the Memoirs of the Baroness of Reidesel, published at Berlin*, 1800.

"General Reidesel commanded that the colours should not be surrendered to the enemy with the arms, but on the contrary that the staffs should be burnt and the flags carefully packed up, this was done as ordered," so that each of the German regiments really kept posses-

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notwithstanding General Gates's letter* to Congress of the 3d December, 1777, which was unworthy a soldier.

General Gates's Propositions, with General Burgoyne's Answers.

" 1*st.*—General Burgoyne's army being exceedingly reduced by repeated defeats, by desertion, sickness, &c. Their provisions exhausted, their military stores, tents and baggage taken or destroyed; their retreat cut off, and their camp invested, they can only be allowed to surrender prisoners of war.	" Lieutenant-gen'l. Burgoyne's army however reduced, will never admit that their retreat is cut off, while they have arms in their hands.
" 2*d.*—The officers and soldiers may keep the baggage belonging to them. The Generals of the United States never permit individuals to be pillaged.	
" 3*d.*—The troops under his excellency General Burgoyne, will be conducted by the most convenient route to New England, marching by easy marches, and sufficiently provided for by the way.	" This article is answered by General Burgoyne's first proposal, which is hereunto annexed.
" 4*th.*—The officers will be admitted on parole, may	" There being no officer in this army under, or ca-

sion of their colours; and the same was, no doubt, the case with the British corps, as the colours of the 62d regiment particularly were on the field the 19th September, and three or four Ensigns were killed.

* See Gordon, Vol. II. page 299.

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wear their side arms, and will be treated with the liberality customary in Europe, so long as they by proper behaviour continue to deserve it; but those who are apprehended having broken their parole, (as some British officers have done) must expect to be close confined.

pable of being under the description of breaking parole, this article needs no answer.

"*5th.*—All public stores, artillery, arms, ammunition, carriages, horses, &c. &c. must be delivered to commissaries appointed to receive them.

"All public stores may be delivered, arms excepted.

"*6th.*—These terms being agreed to, and signed, the troops under his excellency General Burgoyne's command, may be drawn up in their encampment, when they will be ordered to ground their arms, and may thereupon be marched to the river side, to be passed over in their way towards Bennington.

"This article inadmissable in any extremity; sooner than this army will consent to ground their arms in their encampment, they will rush on the enemy, determined to take no quarter.

"J. BURGOYNE."

"*7th.*—A cessation of arms to continue till sunset, to receive General Burgoyne's answer.

"HORATIO GATES.

"*Camp at Saratoga,*
14th Oct. 1777."

Message from General Burgoyne to General Gates, delivered by Major Kingston, to Colonel Wilkinson.

"If General Gates does not mean to recede from the first and sixth articles of his proposals, the treaty to end and hostilities immediately to commence.

"*October* 14*th*, 1777."

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General Burgoyne's preliminary articles, with General Gates's answers.

"The annexed answers being given to Major-general Gates's proposals, it remains for Lieutenant-general Burgoyne, and the army under his command, to state the following preliminary articles on their part.

"1*st.*—The troops to march out of their camp with the honours of war, and the artillery of the intrenchments, which will be left as hereafter, may be regulated.

"1*st.*—The troops to march out of their camp, with the honours of war, and the artillery of the intrenchments to the verge of the river, where the old fort stood, where their arms and the artillery must be left.

"2*d.*—A free passage to be granted to this army to Great Britain upon condition of not serving again in North America during the present contest, and a proper post to be assigned for the entry of transports to receive the troops, whenever General Howe shall so order.

"2*d.*—Agreed to, for the port of Boston.

"3*d.*—Should any cartel take place by which this army or any part of it may be exchanged, the foregoing article to be void as far as such exchange shall be made.

"3*d.*—Agreed.

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" *4th.*—All officers to retain their carriages, batt-horses and other cattle, and no baggage to be molested or searched, the Lieutenant-general giving his honour that there are no public stores secreted therein, Major-general Gates will of course take the necessary measures for the security of this article.	" *4th.*—Agreed.
" *5th.*—Upon the march the officers are not to be separated from their men, and in quarters the officers are to be lodged according to rank, and are not to be hindered from assembling their men for roll callings, and other necessary purposes of regularity.	" *5th.*—Agreed to as far as circumstances will admit.
" *6th.*—There are various corps in the army composed of sailors, batteauxmen, artificers, drivers, independent companies, and followers of the army, and it is expected that those persons of whatever country, shall be included in the fullest sense and utmost extent of the above articles, and comprehended in every respect as British subjects.	" *6th.*—Agreed to in the fullest extent.
" *7th.*—All Canadians and persons belonging to the establishment in Cana-	" *7th.*—Agreed.

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da, to be permitted to return there.

" 8*th*.—Passports to be immediately granted for three officers, not exceeding the rank of Captain, who shall be appointed by General Burgoyne to carry despatches to Sir William Howe, Sir Guy Carlton, and to Great Britain by the way of New York, and the public faith to be engaged that these despatches are not to be opened.

" 8*th*.—Agreed.

" 9*th*.—The foregoing articles are to be considered only as preliminaries for framing a treaty, in the course of which others may arise to be considered by both parties, for which purpose it is proposed, that two officers of each army shall meet and report their deliberations to their respective Generals.

" 9*th*.—The capitulation to be finished by 2 o'clock this day, and the troops march from their encampment at five, and be in readiness to move towards Boston to-morrow morning.

" 10*th*.—Lieutenant-general Burgoyne will send his deputy adjutant-general to receive Major-general Gates's answer, to-morrow morning at 10 o'clock.

" 10*th*.—Complied with.

(Signed)
" J. BURGOYNE.
" *Saratoga, Oct.* 14*th*, 1777."

" *Saratoga, Oct.* 15*th*, 1777.

" H. GATES."

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I delivered these preliminary articles to Major Kingston at the stipulated time, and he soon returned with another message from Lieutenant-general Burgoyne as follows:

Message from General Burgoyne to General Gates, dated October 15th, 1777.

"The eight first preliminary articles of Lieutenant-general Burgoyne's proposals, and the 2d, 3d, and 4th of those of Major-general Gates of yesterday, being agreed to, the foundation of the proposed treaty is out of dispute, but the several subordinate articles and regulations necessarily springing from these preliminaries, and requiring explanation and precision, between the parties, before a definitive treaty can be safely executed, a longer time than that mentioned by General Gates in his answer to the 9th articles becomes indispensably necessary. Lieutenant-general Burgoyne is willing to appoint two officers immediately to meet two others from Major-general Gates, to propound, discuss, and settle those subordinate articles, in order that the treaty in due form may be executed as soon as possible.

(Signed) "J. BURGOYNE.

"*Camp at Saratoga, 15th Oct.* 1777.

"*N. B.* Major Kingston has authority to settle the place for the meeting of the officers proposed."

Brigadier-general Whipple and Colonel Wilkinson meet Lieutenant-colonel Sutherland and Captain Craig.

On receiving this message the General was pleased to name me as one of his representatives, and at my request appointed Brigadier-general Whipple of the militia, to accompany me; and by concert with Major Kingston, a tent was pitched between the advanced guards of the two armies, on the first bank just above General Schuyler's saw mill, where we met Lieutenant-colonel Nicholas Sutherland and Captain James H. Craig of the 47th regiment, on the afternoon of the 16th, having for our secretary Major Pierce, an aid-de-camp of General Gates.

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Having produced and exchanged credentials, we proceeded to discuss the objects of our appointment, and at 8 o'clock, P. M. we signed and exchanged articles of capitulation, and separated to report to our respective Generals.

Having performed this service, and received the approbation of my superior, I proceeded to my daily duty, and on returning to head quarters about 11 o'clock, P. M. found the following note from Captain Craig, to which I by order immediately returned the annexed answer.

"*Camp at Saratoga, 15th Oct. ½ past 10 o'clock.*

"Sir,

Note from Captain Craig and answer.

"Upon reporting the proceedings of this evening to Lieutenant-general Burgoyne I was happy to receive his approbation of and ready concurrence in every article that has been agreed on between us; it however appears upon a retrospect of the treaty, that our zeal to complete it expeditiously has led us unto the admission of a term in the title very different from his meaning, and that of the principal officers of this army, who have been consulted on this important occasion. We have, Sir, unguardedly called that a treaty of *capitulation*, which the army means only as a treaty of convention. With the single alteration of this word, Lieutenant-colonel Sutherland and myself will meet you at the stipulated time to-morrow morning with the fair copy signed by General Burgoyne.

"I hope Sir, you will excuse my troubling you so late, but I thought it better than by any delay to prevent the speedy conclusion of a treaty which seems to be the wish of both parties, and which may prevent the further effusion of blood between us, I beg your immediate answer, and am,

"Sir,

"Your obedient and humble servant,

(Signed) "JAMES HENRY CRAIG.

"*Capt. 47th Reg.*

"*Colonel Wilkinson.*"

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"Colonel Wilkinson's compliments to Captain Craig, Major-general Gates will admit the alteration required.

"*Oct. 15th,—at night.*"

Extraordinary note received from General Burgoyne.

On the morning of the 16th, General Gates received another message from General Burgoyne, which excited a good deal of surprise and some indignation, it was in the following terms.

Message to Major-general Gates.

"In the course of the night Lieutenant-general Burgoyne has received intelligence that a considerable force has been detached from the army under the command of Major-general Gates, during the course of the negociation of the treaty depending between them. Lieutenant-general Burgoyne conceives this, if true, to be not only a violation of the cessation of arms, but subversive of the principles on which the treaty originated, viz. a great superiority of numbers in General Gates's army. Lieutenant-general Burgoyne therefore requires that two officers on his part, be permitted to see that the strength of the force now opposed to him is such as will convince him that no such detachments have been made, and that the same principles of superiority on which the treaty first began still exists.

(Signed) "J. BURGOYNE.

"*Camp at Saratoga, 16th Oct.* 1777."

We had made no detachment, but it was a fact that several hundred of the New York militia, whose term of service had expired, marched off the preceding evening without leave; yet I was irritated by Burgoyne's demand to examine our position and numbers, whilst opposed to us in arms, because it was not only impudent, but I considered it an insult to my General's understanding. I therefore hastily begged leave to wait on Burgoyne, with authority to answer his note, in my own manner, and the

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General by his consent, gave me the strongest proof of his confidence.

I immediately repaired to the advance guard, beat the chamade and requested a subaltern officer, George Edward Schlagel* of the 21st regiment, who received me, to send for Major Kingston, whom I informed, "that I was charged with a verbal message from Major-general Gates to Lieutenant-general Burgoyne," and after some ceremony, I was permitted to pass between two log redoubts, in the rear of which I was introduced to Lieutenant-general Burgoyne, attended by Major-generals Phillips and Reidesel, and Brigadier-generals Hamilton, Gall and Specht.

Wilkinson despatched to the enemy's head quarters to answer this note.

I have some impression that my friend Mr. Livingston again accompanied me, but will not be positive; I have often looked back to that interview, and the incidents of that day, with gratitude to the invisible power which directed my conduct; I was still a minor, when authorised to exercise my judgment on an occasion, which interested the lives of thousands, and involved momentous national consequences. The following statement will best interpret the merits of my agency.

Military character of Burgoyne, Phillips and Reidesel.

A youth, in a plain blue frock, without other military insignia than a cockade and sword, I stood in the presence of three experienced European Generals, soldiers before my birth; Phillips had distinguished himself (and received the thanks of Prince Ferdinand) at Minden in 1759; Burgoyne had served with credit under Count La Lippe on the Tagus, in 1762, and Reidesel was an eléve of the Duke of Brunswick; yet the consciousness of my inexperience did not shake my purpose, and I had conceived in my mind the following message, which I delivered verbatim to Lieutenant-general Burgoyne from Major-general Gates, and afterwards furnished a copy of it.

* Said to be a natural son of George III.

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Message delivered by Colonel Wilkinson to Lieutenant-general Burgoyne, from Major-general Gates, Oct. 16th, 1777.

Wilkinson delivers a message in answer to General Burgoyne's note.

"Major-general Gates in justice to his own reputation, condescends to assure your excellency, that no violation of the treaty has taken place on his part since the commencement of it, the requisition, therefore, contained in your message of this day, is inadmissible; and as it now remains with your excellency to ratify or dissolve the treaty, Major-general Gates expects your immediate and decisive reply.

(Signed) "J. WILKINSON,
"*Deputy Adj. Gen.*"

This message was respectfully received, and some conversation ensued, which gave me an opening to observe, "that his excellency must entertain an humble opinion of Major-general Gates's professional knowledge, or he would not have demanded permission for two of his officers critically to examine his numbers, and of consequence his position, whilst the British army had their arms in their hands, and that General Gates could not but conceive it was trifling with him." This drew out General Burgoyne into a most eloquent vindication of his proceedings "not only his own individual reputation, but the service of the king his master, and the honour of the British arms, enjoined on him the most cautious circumspection;" he analysed the various species of intelligence, from the vague camp rumour and the reports of deserters, up to authentic information, which last he averred was the nature of that he had received the preceding night;* he spoke in high terms

* The fact is that a spy had got into General Burgoyne's camp the night before, who had met the retiring militia in his route, and brought information that General Clinton had taken Fort Montgo-

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of the resolution of his army, and ended by saying, "General Gates has no idea of the principle and spirit which animates the army I command; there is not a man in it, I assure you Colonel Wilkinson, who does not pant for action."—"But," I replied to him, "what can the courage of a handful of men avail, against the numbers you see on the hills beyond the river, and those which surround you? who, I can assure your excellency, are with difficulty restrained from falling on you at all quarters, in the hope of dividing the spoils of your camp," and after a moment's pause, I added, "Be pleased, Sir, to favour me with your determination?" He answered, "I do not recede from my purpose; the truce must end." "At what time, Sir?" "In one hour." We set watches, and on taking leave, I observed, "After what has passed, General Burgoyne, there can be no treaty; your fate must be decided by arms, and General Gates washes his hands of the blood which may be spilled." "Be it so," said he, and I walked off with most uncomfortable sensations; for our troops were much scattered, having encompassed the British army three parts out of four; the men had got the treaty into their heads, and had lost their passion for combat, and what was worse we had been advised of the loss of Fort Montgomery, and a rumour had just arrived that Esopus was burnt, and the enemy proceeding up the river; but I had not proceeded fifty rods, when Major Kingston ran after me and hailed; I halted, and he informed me, that General Burgoyne was desirous to say a few words to me; I returned, when he addressed me by observing, that "General Gates had in the business depending between them, been very indulgent, and therefore he would hope for time to take the opinion of his general officers, in a case of such magnitude to the two armies; as it was far from his disposition to trifle in an

Burgoyne declares the truce must end.

Wilkinson departs, and is recalled by Major Kingston.

mery; he therefore sought an occasion to break off the treaty, with an intention to leave his camp and artillery standing, with his sick and followers, and with his musketry to make a night attack, force our right, and by a rapid march gain Albany, there to wait events.

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affair of such importance." Gen. Phillips then spoke, "Yes Sir, yes Sir, Gen. Burgoyne don't mean to trifle on so serious an occasion; but he feels it his duty to consult his officers."* I asked what time he would require? he

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Burgoyne requests two hours longer to consult his officers.

* The following extracts from the evidence of the Earl of Balcarras before the House of Commons, will tend to explain these details.

"*Question.*—When Colonel Kingston brought back the first proposition, wherein it was specified by Major-general Gates that the army should lay down their arms in their entrenchments, and surrender prisoners of war, does your Lordship remember that General Burgoyne, when he read them to the council, declared he would not set his hand to those conditions, or words to that effect?

"*Answer.*—I think the words of the proposal from General Gates were, that the British army should be ordered by word of command from their adjutant-general, to lay down their arms in the entrenchments: it was rejected with disdain by General Burgoyne, and the council concurred in his indignation.

"*Question.*—Were the counter-proposals penned by General Burgoyne unanimously approved of?

"*Answer.*—They were.

"*Question.*—When those proposals had been agreed to by General Gates, but copies not signed by either party, do you remember General Burgoyne informing the council of intelligence he had received from a spy in the night, and submitting to their consideration, whether it was consistent with public faith, and if so, expedient, to suspend the execution of the treaty, and trust to events.

"*Answer*—I do remember it.

"*Question.*—Does your Lordship recollect what was the result of that consideration?

"*Answer.*—The determination of the council, on the question being put, was, that the public faith was bona fide plighted.

"*Question*—When advice was received that Sir Henry Clinton was coming up the North river, did you apprehend the treaty of convention had gone so far that it could not be broken?

"*Answer.*—My opinion was, with respect to that question, that all military negotiations were fair and justifiable to make delays and to gain time; I therefore thought and declared my sentiments, that General Burgoyne was at full liberty to break off that treaty in the stage it then was, and I could not conceive that the public faith was engaged, until the treaty was signed and exchanged.

"*Question.*—Whether the opinion of General Burgoyne, of General Phillips, of Brigadier Hamilton, and several other officers, did not

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mentioned two hours; and we again set watches, and I retired, promising to wait at our picket for his answer.

The interview with General Burgoyne had been spun out to such length, that General Gates became uneasy, and I found a messenger waiting at our picket, to know what I had done. I reported in brief, what had passed, and what was depending; and took a station near the ruins of General Schuyler's house, where I walked, and expected with much anxiety, the result of General Burgoyne's consultation: the two hours had elapsed by a quarter, and an aid-de-camp from the General had been with me, to know how matters progressed; soon after, I perceived Lieutenant-colonel Sutherland opposite to me, and beckoned him to cross the creek; on approaching me he observed, "Well, our business will be knocked on the head after all." I inquired why? He said, "the officers had got the devil in their heads, and could not agree." I replied gaily, "I am sorry for it, as you will now not only lose your fusee,* but your whole baggage." He expressed much sorrow, but said he could not help it. At this moment I recollected the letter Captain Craig had written me the night before, and taking it from my pocket, I read it to the Colonel, who declared he had not been privy to it; and added with evident anxiety, "Will you give me that letter." I answered in the negative, and observed, "I should hold

Colonel Sutherland comes to the advanced post.

Conversation between him and Wilkinson.

coincide with your opinion in all the matters comprised in the last question.

"*Answer.*—As General Burgoyne seems desirous that I should answer that question, I declare his sentiments were the same with those I have now delivered. I hope that the other members of that council, will soon be in a situation to stand forward and to declare the opinion that they gave, on that and every other question.

"*Question.*—When the question relative to the point of public faith was decided by the majority of the council, was not the concurrence for signing the convention unanimous?

"*Answer.*—It was.

* Which he had owned thirty-five years, and had desired me to except from the surrendered arms and save for him, as she was a favourite piece.

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it as a testimony of the good faith of a British commander." He hastily replied, "Spare me that letter, Sir, and I pledge you my honour I will return it in fifteen minutes." I penetrated the motive, and willingly handed it to him; he sprang off with it, and directing his course to the British camp, ran as far as I could see him: in the mean time, I received a peremptory message from the General, to break off the treaty, if the convention was not immediately ratified. I informed him by the messenger, that I was doing the best I could for him, and would see him in half an hour. Colonel Sutherland was punctual to his promise, and returned with Captain Craig, who delivered me the convention, signed by General Burgoyne, with an additional article specifically to include himself, which I engaged should be admitted by General Gates, and immediately sent to General Burgoyne. I then returned to head quarters, after eight hours absence, and presented to General Gates the important document, that made the British army conventional prisoners to the United States, which, together with a return, founded on authentic documents now in my possession, of the forces which surrendered, is deemed worthy of record in this place.

Colonel Sutherland returns to camp with Captain Craig's note.

Returns with Captain Craig, bringing the convention signed by General Burgoyne, with an additional article.

General Gates assents to the additional article, and signs it.

Articles of Convention between Lieutenant-general Burgoyne and Major-general Gates.

I.

"The troops under Lieutenant-general Burgoyne, to march out of their camp with the honours of war, and the artillery of the entrenchments, to the verge of the river where the old fort stood, where the arms and artillery are to be left; the arms to be piled by word of command from their own officers.

II.

"A free passage to be granted to the army under Lieutenant-general Burgoyne to Great Britain, on condition of not serving again in North America during the present contest; and the port of Boston is assigned for

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the entry of transports to receive the troops, whenever General Howe shall so order.

III.

"Should any cartel take place, by which the army under General Burgoyne, or any part of it, may be exchanged. the foregoing article to be void as far as such exchange shall be made.

IV.

"The army under Lieutenant-general Burgoyne, to march to Massachusetts Bay, by the easiest, most expeditious, and convenient route; and to be quartered in, near, or as convenient as possible to Boston, that the march of the troops may not be delayed, when transports arrive to receive them.

V.

"The troops to be supplied on their march, and during their being in quarters, with provisions, by General Gates's orders, at the same rate of rations as the troops of his own army; and if possible the officers' horses and cattle are to be supplied with forage at the usual rates.

VI.

"All officers to retain their carriages, batt-horses and other cattle, and no baggage to be molested or searched; Lieutenant-general Burgoyne giving his honour that there are no public stores secreted therein. Major-general Gates will of course take the necessary measures for the due performance of this article. Should any carriages be wanted during the march for the transportation of officers' baggage, they are, if possible, to be supplied by the country at the usual rates.

VII.

"Upon the march, and during the time the army shall remain in quarters in Massachusetts Bay, the officers are not, as far as circumstances will admit, to be sepa-

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rated from their men. The officers are to be quartered according to rank, and are not to be hindered from assembling their men for roll call, and other necessary purposes of regularity.

VIII.

"All corps whatever, of General Burgoyne's army, whether composed of sailors, batteaumen, artificers, drivers, independent companies, and followers of the army, of whatever country, shall be included in the fullest sense and utmost extent of the above articles, and comprehended in every respect as British subjects.

IX.

"All Canadians, and persons belonging to the Canadian establishment, consisting of sailors, batteaumen, artificers, drivers, independent companies, and many other followers of the army, who come under no particular description, are to be permitted to return there; they are to be conducted immediately by the shortest route to the first British post on Lake George, are to be supplied with provisions in the same manner as the other troops, and are to be bound by the same condition of not serving during the present contest in North America.

X.

"Passports to be immediately granted for three officers, not exceeding the rank of captains, who shall be appointed by Lieutenant-general Burgoyne, to carry despatches to Sir William Howe, Sir Guy Carleton, and to Great Britain, by the way of New York; and Major-general Gates engages the public faith, that these despatches shall not be opened. These officers are to set out immediately after receiving their despatches, and are to travel the shortest route and in the most expeditious manner.

XI.

"During the stay of the troops in Massachusetts Bay,

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the officers are to be admitted on parole, and are to be allowed to wear their side arms.

XII.

"Should the army under Lieutenant-general Burgoyne find it necessary to send for their clothing and other baggage to Canada, they are to be permitted to do it in the most convenient manner, and the necessary passports granted for that purpose.

XIII.

"These articles are to be mutually signed and exchanged to-morrow morning at 9 o'clock, and the troops under Lieutenant-general Burgoyne are to march out of their entrenchments at three o'clock in the afternoon.

(Signed) "HORATIO GATES, *Major-general.*

(Signed) "J. BURGOYNE, *Lieutenant-general.*

"*Saratoga, Oct.* 16*th*, 1777."

"To prevent any doubts that might arise from Lieutenant-general Burgoyne's name not being mentioned in the above treaty, Major-general Gates hereby declares, that he is understood to be comprehended in it, as fully as if his name had been specifically mentioned.

"HORATIO GATES."

See Return [*F*].

Reflections on the convention.

Thus terminated a negociation which prostrated the power of the enemy in the north, disconcerted a dangerous project, and distracted his future operations. It invigorated the national spirit, retrieved disasters in the south, and encouraged the public councils to resist the insidious plans of the British cabinet, to disunite the American people and disarm opposition. This signal event, though first in eclat, was secondary in its consequences, to the glorious achievement at Trenton; I take the distinction, that in the latter case we were contending for life, with a handful of troops opposed to an host; and in the former we were defending property with an overwhelming force. Impartial posterity will determine, what were

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my humble merits in these important transactions; and it would be a gratification to know, what *mighty space of public utility was occupied by President Madison in those eventful days.* CHAP. VIII.

Early on the morning of the 17th, I visited General Burgoyne in his camp, and accompanied him to the ground where his army was to lay down their arms, from whence we rode to the bank of the Hudson's river, which he surveyed with attention, and asked me whether it was not fordable, Certainly Sir, but do you observe the people on the opposite shore? Yes, replied he, "I have seen them too long."

Meeting between General Burgoyne and General Gates.

He then proposed to be introduced to General Gates, and we crossed the Fishkill and proceeded towards his head quarters, General Burgoyne in front with his adjutant-general, Kingston, and his aides-de-camp Captain Lord Petersham* and Lieutenant Wilford† behind him, then followed Major-general Phillips, the Baron Reidesel and the other general officers and their suites according to rank. General Gates advised of Burgoyne's approach met him at the head of his camp, Burgoyne in a rich royal uniform, and Gates in a plain blue frock, when they had approached nearly within sword's length they reined up and halted, I then named the gentlemen and General Burgoyne raising his hat most gracefully said, "The fortune of war, General Gates, has made me your prisoner," to which the conqueror, returning a courtly salute, promptly replied, "I shall always be ready to bear testimony that it has not been through any fault of your excellency."‡ Major-general Phillips then ad-

* Now Lieutenant-general the Earl of Harrington, Colonel of the 1st regiment of Life Guards, and Governor of Windsor Castle.

† Now Lieutenant-general and Colonel of the 7th regiment of Dragoon Guards.

‡ Very different was the conduct of Charles V. to the Elector of Saxony, after the affair of Muhlberg, in which he was made prisoner; approaching the Emperor, the unfortunate Prince addressed him, "The fortune of war has made me your prisoner, most gracious Emperor, and I hope to be treated—" here Charles harshly interrupted him, "and am I then at last acknowledged to be Emperor? Charles

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vanced, and he and General Gates saluted and shook hands with the familiarity of old acquaintances. The Baron Reidesel and the other officers were introduced in their turn, and as soon as the ceremony was concluded, I left the party and returned to the British camp, to establish guards, take an account of the ordnance and give orders for the march of the prisoners.

Of the returns* exhibited in this place, the first will shew the whole train of artillery which accompanied the British army, excepting four light pieces taken at Bennington, and will serve to contradict the malicious fabrications invented on that subject, and framed to prejudice General Burgoyne's character; and the other is a testimonial that although conquered, the British army fought gallantly, bled profusely, and fell covered with honour. The unprecedented disproportion in killed and wounded of their officers and privates, must be accounted for on the superior marksmanship of the yeomanry of the country, who had been accustomed to the use of arms from early youth, and not

of Ghent was the only title, you lately bestowed on me. You shall be treated as you deserve." And turned from him abruptly with an haughty air.

* *RETURN of Ordnance and Stores taken from the enemy, Oct. 7th and 17th, 1777.*

CANNON.	Number	
Brass 12 pounder,	2	Taken 7th October, near Stillwater.
Do. 6 do.	6	
Do. 24 do.	2	Taken October 17th, at Saratoga.
Do. 12 do.	2	
Do. 6 do.	12	
Do. 3 do.	4	
Royal howitzers,	5	
Eight inch howitzers,	2	
Total of ordnance,	35	

N. B. Implements and stores complete for the pieces; particulars not ascertained for want of time; five thousand stand of arms are taken, and a great quantity of musket cartridges and a number of ammunition wagons, travelling forges, &c.

EBENEZER STEPHENS, *Major,*
Commanding U. S. Artillery.

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yet sufficiently drilled to have lost the faculties of volition. And Morgan's corps then and Forsyth's in the late war demonstrate that in mountainous countries and close grounds, the citizens of the United States in their natural condition, under strict government, and led by brave and intelligent officers are more destructive when opposed to military machinery, and tactical evolutions, than any other species of troops.

Wilkinson is taken sick and proceeds to Albany.

The strong excitements produced by the important scenes in which I had been engaged, and the constitutional energies supported by the interests which those scenes had inspired now failed me; I was no longer able to keep my seat on horseback, and placed on a bed in a wagon by the side of Colonel Philip Van Courtland, of the New York troops, who was reduced to a similar state of debility; we were conveyed to Albany, where I had nearly expired the ensuing night under the anguish of a convulsive cholic. In this enfeebled condition, with a surgeon of the hospital, Doctor Hagan, to accompany me, I was despatched on the 20th* with the convention

Regulars killed, wounded, and prisoners in the Campaign 1777.

		Killed.	Wounded	Prisoners.	Total.
British.	Officers,	26	47	19	92
	Sergeants,	15	33	14	62
	Drummers,	3	5	6	14
	Rank and File,	207	549	449	1205
Germans.	Officers,	10	16	29	55
	Sergeants,	12	28	59	99
	Drummers,	1	8	18	27
	Rank and File,	141	225	575	941
	Aggregate,	415	911	1169	2495

Burgoyne's State of the expedition from Canada. Appendix No. II.

GENERAL ORDERS.

"*Albany, 20th Oct.* 1777.

"Major John Armstrong to do the duty of deputy adjutant-general until Colonel Wilkinson returns to camp. The brigade majors are to attend at head quarters every morning at 11 o'clock and every evening at 7 for general orders."

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and the following letter to the President of Congress; at the same time Major-general Schuyler favoured me with the most flattering credentials, to his friends in that honourable body.

"*Camp Saratoga, 18th Oct. 1777.*

"Sir,

"I have the satisfaction to present your excellency with the convention of Saratoga, by which his excellency Lieutenant-general Burgoyne has surrendered himself and his whole army into my hands, and they are now upon their march for Boston; *this signal and important event is the more glorious, as it was effected with so little loss to the army of the United States.*

"This letter will be presented to your excellency by my adjutant-general, Colonel Wilkinson, to whom I must beg leave to refer your excellency for the particulars that brought this great business to so happy and fortunate a conclusion.

"I desire to be permitted to recommend this gallant officer, in the warmest manner, to Congress; and intreat that he may be continued in his present office with the brevet of a brigadier-general.

"The honourable Congress will believe me when I assure them, that from the beginning of this contest I have (not) met with a more promising military genius than Colonel Wilkinson, and *whose services have been of the last importance to this army.*

"I have the honour to be,

"Your excellency's most obedient

"And humble servant,

"HORATIO GATES.

"*His Excellency John Hancock, esq.*

President of Congress."

This letter is most particularly worthy of remark, inasmuch as it measures the importance of the triumph, by the cheapness with which it was purchased; but in the reign of President Madison, a bloodless victory is no

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compliment to the victor, whilst a bloody defeat is considered the consummation of generalship; and by a very natural transition, the odious cowardice at Bladensburg, has secured the ascriptions of military excellence to mere animal courage. The first days and nights of my journey were painful in the extreme, but moderate exercise and change of climate gave me strength, yet I was extremely sensible to fatigue. The third day I passed the ruins of Esopus, (Kingston) which had been recently burnt by General Vaughan,* and at Hurly I found Governor Clinton, Colonel Lamb and other officers, with the honourable G. Morris, whose zeal and patriotism in those days of trial were conspicuous; for I remember he had visited the army at Fort Edward, in the most gloomy stage of the campaign, and mingled in the councils of General Schuyler when his country had deserted him.

In this state, accompanied by a surgeon, is despatched to Congress with the convention. Wilkinson proceeds on his journey.

Governor Clinton, with his characteristic activity, perseverance and decision, had been, (subsequently to the loss of Fort Montgomery, from whence, after combating the enemy "*ense manu*," I understand he escaped by leaping down a precipice,) incessantly engaged in raising a force to cover the country on the west of the Hudson's river, against the depredations of the enemy; but, hither-

* "*Albany, 19th October*, 1777.

"Sir,

"With unexampled cruelty you have reduced the fine village of Kingston to ashes, and most of the wretched inhabitants to ruin; I am informed you also continue to ravage and burn all before you on both sides of the river. Is it thus your king's generals think to make converts to the royal cause? It is no less surprising than true that the measures they adopt to serve their master, have the quite contrary effect. Their cruelty, established the glorious act of independence, upon the broad basis of the general resentments of the people.

"Abler generals and much older officers than you can pretend to be, are now by the fortune of war, in my hands; their fortune may one day be yours, when Sir, it may not be in the power of any thing human, to save you from the just revenge of an injured people.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obed't. humble serv't.

"HORATIO GATES.

"*The Hon. John Vaughan, Major-general.*"

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to his efforts had proved unavailing, though his vigilance and exertions were unceasing. His correspondence with General Gates, which I shall here insert, will unfold some incidents not unworthy note, and will bear testimony to the energy and discernment of this distinguished patriot.

"*New Windsor, Oct. 9th, 1777.*

"Dear General,

"Immediately after our late misfortunes at Fort Montgomery, I wrote the legislature of this state the particulars, requesting them without delay to forward them to you. My hurry at that time and since prevented my answering your favour of the 4th instant till now, since which the enemy have taken possession of Fort Constitution, and are at this time not far below the chevaux de frize. My guards fell in with and took two spies from General Clinton going to Burgoyne; one of them confessed that his orders were to make all possible despatch, to inform General Burgoyne that he had got Fort Montgomery, *the key of America*, and was preparing to weigh the chevaux de frize; and that he (Burgoyne) might proceed, as all obstacles in the river were removed; he further says that Clinton is determined to push up the river to relieve Burgoyne from his present difficulty. The enclosed confession of Taylor will give you some idea of their past manœuvres and future intentions. If I have been rightly informed, your army is now so numerous, that you can with safety order a part to establish a post at or on this side of Albany; in that case, if they move up, General Putnam, who is collecting a large body of Connecticut militia on the opposite shore, will be able to join them. I shall endeavour to keep between them and your army with two continental regiments and some militia, and hope by this means to prevent their reaching Albany; indeed I am sure it can be done, provided you establish a post on this side for us to retire to. I cannot at present ascertain the number lost at Fort Montgomery. My brother General Clinton, (who received a

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wound in his thigh) with a number of other officers, together with two hundred of Deboise's regiment, *made their escape after the enemy were in possession of the fort*, and have come in safe. We have just received intelligence, that General Washington attacked the enemy last Saturday on Chesnut hill, near Philadelphia, defeated and drove them through Germantown; night coming on, he withdrew, and renewed the attack early on Sunday morning, and had gained the victory. We have yet received no authenticated accounts of the action. Colonel Lamb, and most of the officers and men who were with me at the fort, have also escaped.

"I am, dear Sir, with great regard,

"Your most obedient servant,

"GEO. CLINTON.

"*Major-general Gates.*"

The Confession of Daniel Taylor (a Spy) *at New Windsor, Thursday, Oct. 9th*, 1777.

"I left Fort Montgomery yesterday evening, with a charge from Sir Henry Clinton, to go with all possible despatch through the country on the west side of Hudson's river to General Burgoyne, and acquaint him, that on Monday the 6th inst. he stormed and carried the fort, with the loss of Lieutenant-colonel Grant, Major Campbell, Major Sela and other field officers, a number of other officers whose names he does not recollect, and upwards of three hundred rank and file killed, and to acquaint General Burgoyne that the obstructions in the river are now nearly removed, and that he might move forward as fast as he pleased; that General Howe had defeated the rebels near Philadelphia, and that the two frigates belonging to the rebels in Hudson's river were both burnt; a Captain Campbell of Burgoyne's army, lately arrived with despatches to General Clinton, and set off on his return yesterday morning, with the news of the reduction of Fort Montgomery, and that a number

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of people are employed who go constantly from one army to the other, and that Lieutenant-general Clinton intended to push up the river."

"*New Windsor, Oct. 11th,* 1777.

"Dear General,

"In my letter of the 9th inst. I informed you of a spy we had taken, after which I was given to understand he had swallowed the letter which he had in charge from Clinton to Burgoyne. I immediately ordered him a severe dose of tartar emetic, and last night brought from him *a small silver bullet.* In the hollow of it was a letter; the copy I now inclose, by which you may see that Clinton is by no means confident of a junction.

"The success of our arms under your command has just arrived, on which I most heartily congratulate you, and with you lament the misfortunes of Generals Arnold and Lincoln. I am daily gathering strength at this post, and cannot but hope, that if General Clinton should attempt Albany, it will end much to our advantage. General Washington has been very successful to the southward.

"In haste, and with esteem,

"I am, dear General,

"Your obedient humble servant,

"GEO. CLINTON.

"*P. S.* Be pleased to make my kindest compliments to Generals Lincoln and Arnold.

"*Major-general Gates.*"

(COPY.)

"*Fort Montgomery, Oct. 8th,* 1777.

"Nous y voici, and nothing now between us but Gates. I sincerely hope this little success of ours may facilitate your operations. In answer to your letter of the 20th Sept. by C. C., I shall only say I cannot pre-

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sume to order or even advise, for reasons obvious. I heartily wish you success. CHAP. VIII.

"Faithfully yours,
"H. CLINTON."

"*Hurley, 2½ miles from Kingston, Oct. 21st*, 1777.

"Dear Sir,

"I have repeatedly done myself the honour to inform you of my situation, and think it my duty again to do so, that if any of those consequences should happen which may now be easily foreseen, the blame, if any, may not lie at my door.

"When I undertook, at the request of General Putnam, to put myself at the head of a body of men to protect the western shores of Hudson's river, and to throw myself between the enemy and your army should they proceed up the river, I represented to him in strong terms the situation of this part of the country, thinly inhabited, and the interior part, unsettled and separated from all assistance, by a chain of mountains; in consequence of which representation he agreed to let me have three thousand men of the eastern militia, should they come in as he expected they would, of which number, however, he hath not sent me four hundred. I then clearly saw, that it would be impossible for me to protect the country, unless I could be reinforced from the northern army, which from your letter I had reason to expect. I wrote also to General Dickenson of New Jersey upon the same subject, and I am informed, that notwithstanding the exposed situation of his own state, he has ordered six hundred men to my brother's assistance at New Windsor. Kingston has been destroyed, merely because I have been so deceived in my expectations of assistance, that it was impossible to take measures for its security. I am now Sir, at the head of little more than one thousand men, to cover the most valuable part of the county of Ulster.

"The enemy have lain still yesterday and the day before, with a strong southerly wind, from whence it is evident that a knowledge of Burgoyne's fate hath changed

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their intentions against Albany. If they land in force, I must either retreat or sacrifice my few men, and lose seven very valuable pieces of field artillery. If I retreat, this whole country will be ravaged and destroyed, and that at a season of the year when the inhabitants, who are warmly attached to the American cause, will want time to provide cover for their families against the inclemencies of the ensuing winter. While we act merely on the defensive, two thousand men on the river will find full employment for twelve or fifteen hundred; but if four thousand are left to cover Albany, two thousand here, and two thousand on the other side of the river, it will be by no means impracticable to recover the passes in the highlands; in which case the greater part of the army, now along the banks of the river, may be brought to act offensively against the enemy, and perhaps render the present campaign decisive in our favour.

"Colonel Malcolm, who is the bearer of this letter, will do himself the honour of stating and explaining to you my ideas upon this subject, and you will do me a particular favour, if in answer to this, you will inform me, what I am to expect, and what is expected from me.

"I am, dear General,

"With particular esteem,

"Your most ob't serv't.

"GEO. CLINTON.

"*To the Hon. Major-general Gates—Albany.*"

On the 24th I reached Easton where I rested the 25th; at this place I fell in with Doctor William Shippen, the director-general of military hospitals, whose anatomical lectures I had attended in the years 1774–5, and with whom I had since become intimate; in the course of conversation with this gentleman and Mrs. ———, a most respectable lady, still living in Philadelphia, I was asked whether I had seen Gen. Conway's letter to Gen. Gates, in which he assigned thirteen reasons for the loss of the battle of Brandywine? I had perused this letter, and heard Gen. Gates read and comment on it, in the presence of

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several officers of the army, but thought nothing more of it until I was thus questioned; nor did it then occur to me as a matter of importance. I arrived at Reading the evening of the 27th, and was visited by General Mifflin, with whom I had been acquainted at the siege of Boston, he invited me to take tea with him, and I found two eastern members of Congress at his house; I was minutely questioned by them, respecting the military operations in the north, General Washington's misfortunes were strictured severely by them, and General Conway's criticisms were again mentioned. General Mifflin appeared exceedingly despondent, and observed that he considered the insurance of buildings at Reading against the depredations of the enemy worthy reflection; this evening it began to rain, and the next day it fell in torrents; Lord Sterling was confined at this village, in consequence of a fall from his horse, and being myself detained by the weather, for I dared not ride in the rain, I consented at his earnest request to take a pot luck dinner with him, and was happy to meet my friend Major Monroe* in capacity of aid-de-camp to his Lordship; with a noble deportment and dignified manners, Lord Sterling combined sound education and respectable talents. I speak of his foibles with reluctance, for he was an officer of conspicuous gallantry; his addictions were notorious and his fondness for a long set not the least remarkable, for no man could be more strongly disposed to fight his battles over again. The Earl had another aid-de-camp by the name of M'Williams, whom I had never seen before. We dined agreeably and I did not get away from his lordship before midnight, the rain continuing to pour down without intermission. In the course of the day, his lordship fought over the battle of Long Island in detail, and favoured me with recitals of all the affairs in which he had subsequently performed a part, and I reciprocated information of such transactions in the north as could interest or amuse him. The conversation was too copious and diffuse for me to have charged my memory with par-

Arrives at Reading, and has an interview with General Mifflin.

* Now Secretary of State.

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ticulars, and from the circumstances of it, it was confidential.

Wilkinson arrives at Congress, and delivers his despatches.

During the night, the Schuylkill had overflowed its banks, and swept away all the scows from the neighbouring ferries; I therefore found it impracticable to cross the river until the 30th, and arrived at York-town the seat of the Congress the next day; but Mr. Hancock had resigned the presidency, and the secretary, Mr. Charles Thompson, was by a resolution of Congress officiating as president; I therefore had the satisfaction to deliver my public despatches to that respectable citizen and exemplary patriot, and by an order of Congress attended that honourable body, where I was received with kindness and treated with indulgence. After having answered sundry questions respecting the relative situation of the two armies before, at and after the convention, the bearing of which in some instances tended to depreciate its importance; I observed, that I had in charge sundry papers to be submitted to Congress, which required time for their arrangement, and thereupon I was permitted to withdraw.

Perceives a disposition in certain members to depreciate the capture of Burgoyne.

In the course of this audience, I thought I perceived a disposition in two or three gentlemen to derogate from Gen. Gates's triumph. I had been questioned as to the practicability of making Burgoyne's army prisoners of war, and had heard it observed, that it would have been better for the United States if that army had escaped to Canada, where it would have been out of the way; whereas the convention would merely serve to transfer it to Sir William Howe, and bring Burgoyne's whole force immediately into operation against us on the Atlantic coast. As unreasonable as these exceptions were, they merited consideration, and I determined to exercise the authority General Gates had given me, and meet them by a message to be prepared for Congress, in his name. I consulted two of his friends, Messrs. Samuel Adams and James Lovell, on the subject, to whom I had letters, who commended the plan, and I made a draft which they entirely approved.

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Is again introduced to Congress

Having prepared and arranged the documents preliminary to the convention, with returns of the two armies, and of the ordnance and stores captured, I was again introduced to Congress on the afternoon of the 3d, by Mr. Thompson, Mr. Henry Laurens having been chosen the president, and delivered to that body a message from General Gates in the following words.

In Congress, Nov. 3d, 1777—4 o'clock, P. M.

"According to order Colonel Wilkinson attended, and delivered a message from General Gates in the following words.

"I have it in charge from Major-general Gates to represent to the honourable the Congress, that Lieutenant-general Burgoyne at the time he capitulated was strongly intrenched in a formidable post, with twelve day's provision; that the reduction of Fort Montgomery, and the enemy's consequent progress up the Hudson's river, endangered our arsenal at Albany; a reflection which left General Gates no time to contest the capitulation with General Burgoyne, but induced the necessity of immediately closing with his proposals, hazarding a disadvantageous attack, or retiring from his position for the security of our magazine. This delicate situation abridged our conquest, and procured Lieutenant-general Burgoyne the terms he enjoys. Had our attack been carried against General Burgoyne, the dismemberment of our army must necessarily have been such as would have incapacitated it from further action. With an army in health, vigour and spirits, Major-general Gates now waits the commands of the honourable Congress.

"Colonel Wilkinson then laid before Congress sundry original papers relative to the convention, which were read; viz.

"1st.—A message from Lieutenant-general Burgoyne to Major-general Gates, with General Gates's answer of the 13th of October, 1777.

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"2d.—A message from Lieutenant-general Burgoyne the 14th of October.

"3d.—Another message accompanying the former.

"4th.—General Gates's proposals to Lieutenant-general Burgoyne, with General-Burgoyne's answers.

"5th.—A message from Lieutenant-general Burgoyne to General Gates.

"6th.—General Burgoyne's proposals, and General Gates's answers.

"7th.—Message from Lieutenant-general Burgoyne to General Gates, Oct. 15th.

"8th.—Another message from General Burgoyne to General Gates, Oct. 16th.

"9th.—Message from General Gates to General Burgoyne.

"10th.—Return of General Burgoyne's army which surrendered.

"11th.—Return of ordnance, &c. taken and surrendered.

"12th.—Articles of convention.

"13th.—General Gates's explanation to include General Burgoyne in the convention."

I then described minutely the strong ground occupied by General Burgoyne, and the true state of our own force, which depended chiefly on volunteer militia, and fluctuated from day to day; for it is a fact that the state of the continental troops varied little from the return of the 4th of October, which was the last I recollect to have received, and in truth another was not due until the 1st of November, though it was in the power of the general to order one at his discretion; the impatience of the yeomanry to return home was demonstrated by those who were met by Burgoyne's spy on the night of the 15th, and numbers on the east side of the river retired on the 16th and 17th, before and after it was ascertained that the enemy was to surrender, but anterior to the consummation of the event; however, no argument can be fairly

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deduced from these facts, to affect the constancy of the militia, that bulwark of the constitution, the freedom and the independence of the nation; for these men, consisting of all ranks and ages, had come forth without contract or engagement, on the spur of the occasion, provided only for a week, and had continued in service a fortnight; and I remember well to have seen among them one of the oldest and most faithful supporters of the revolution, the venerable and inflexible patriot John Langdon: if these same men had been drafted or classed for three or four months, their services might have been confidently relied on, and it is a truth not to be denied, that the disrepute and odium contrived to be thrown on the militia, may be honestly ascribed to the ignorance, apathy and improvidence of the general government. It would seem that we covet blessings which we are unwilling to pay for; but, at the same time, to save the trouble of inquiry and reflection, with heedless heads and lavish hands, we follow the example of the old world, and dissipate millions for exterior defence, on institutions which, in process of time, must infallibly destroy the balance of power; and by increasing the patronage and influence of the executive department, will enable that branch of the government insensibly to subvert the principles of the constitution, and swallow up the liberties of the people. To avert these evils, the citizens of the United States should spare no pains or expense, to organise and equip themselves for *self-defence;* fill your country with arms and munitions of war, my countrymen; deposit them in suitable magazines, conveniently established throughout the national limits, and have them carefully preserved for service; fortify your ports, harbours, commanding defiles, and critical passes, with durable works, judiciously constructed and competently endowed: and then, with an ocean of three thousand miles between you and the European states, no power on earth can be tempted to invade your borders; because of the enormous expense, and the impossibility of acquiring any *permanent* advantage, over an armed and a brave people, far removed from every trans-

Conduct of the militia highly praiseworthy.

Reflections on our present mode of defence.

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atlantic resource. Thus the means of safety and of happiness are as obvious, as the insidious measures of President Madison have been corrupt, dangerous and destructive. The reader will pardon this digression, which springs out of my solicitude to preserve unimpaired, the glorious fabric established on the best blood of the American people.

Having submitted my report and explanations to the national representatives, I requested that the original documents might be restored to me, after they had been copied; an order was made to that effect, they were returned, and have remained in my possession ever since.

The day after I had thus faithfully acquitted myself to my general, I sat down and advised him of my proceedings in a letter which I shall expose, although written in haste, and conveying the effusions of a youthful, ardent, and affectionate heart.

"York-town, Nov. 4th, 1777.

Wilkinson's letter to General Gates, Nov. 4, 1777.

"My dear General and loved Friend,

"I arrived at this place on the 31st ultimo. A confirmation of the convention amply compensated, for the anxiety which a want of earlier intelligence had occasioned the Congress. I was immediately called before Congress, and after answering a few general questions, informed them, that I had a message from you, with a number of papers prefatory to the convention, to lay before the honourable house, an arrangement of which would take up a day or two; I therefore begged a suspension of any further examination, until I had reduced these matters to proper order, which was granted, and I withdrew.

"I found the chair vacated by the resignation of Mr. Hancock, and that seat of honour was conferred on Colonel Laurens of South Carolina, who, to be short, is a gentleman of judgment and liberality.

"Through the industry of your friends, whom you had indulged with copies, the articles of treaty (with their diabolical comments, I suppose,) reached the grand army

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before I did the Congress. The predetermined, readily disapproved, and induced the ignorant to condemn them; a clamour has ensued, which must, however, be short lived. Before I proceed further, permit me to intreat you, never in future to suffer copies to be taken, or even indiscriminately to suffer persons to inspect your public or private papers; for believe me, my dear Sir, it gives your enemies great advantages over you. In this instance, copies of the convention, accompanied by the idea of General Burgoyne's being entirely in your power before he surrendered, with a total suppression of every circumstance which tended to explain your critical situation, preceded your despatches, and unfavourable impressions are received; prejudices are inculcated by the malicious, which might have reached and contaminated Congress; and there is such a bias in the minds of men when prejudiced, that it affects their actions unknown to themselves. Excuse me, had I loved you less, I should have been less free.

"On the 3d instant (yesterday,) I had the honour to read to Congress the inclosed papers, and presented the returns, taking care to recapitulate every collateral circumstance necessary to explain your real situation, and if this well meant procedure meets with your approbation, I shall be happy.

"Beware of Arnold; he has endeavoured to stab you. I met Bob* at this place; he is in health, so is Mrs. Gates. As Congress have determined to push military operations this winter, I took the liberty of suggesting to your lady the propriety of continuing on the farm, till she hears further from you.†

"The dissensions, the jealousies, calumnies, and detractions which pervade a certain quarter, must be reserved for some other opportunity, I am often asked the

* His son and only child.

† By this honest intention I incurred the displeasure of this lady, who lived and died my enemy.

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cause of your not writing to General Washington; so that this *omission* has been noticed publicly.

"I shall leave this on Sunday, go by Reading to the grand army, continue there a week; from thence move to Easton, the present residence of my beloved, where I wish to hear from you as soon as possible: address any letter to me, to the care of Colonel Hooper of that town.

"I am not as yet honoured with any mark of distinction from Congress; indeed, should I receive no testimony of their approbation of my conduct, I shall not be mortified;—my hearty contempt of the follies of this world, will shield me from such pitiful sensations.

"I am, my dear General,

"Your affectionate friend,

"JA. WILKINSON.

"*Major-general Gates,*
Commanding the Northern Department."

Wilkinson receives the brevet of brigadier-general.

On the 6th of November, Congress honoured me with the brevet of a brigadier-general, and a day or two after I left York-town, to pay my respects to the commander in chief, to receive his orders and embrace my numerous military friends and acquaintance. I took Reading in my route, and passed some days in that place, where I had several dear and respected friends, and among them Edward Biddle, esq.* a man whose public and private virtues commanded respect and excited admiration from all per-

Character of Edward Biddle, esquire.

* I shall here submit to the reader an anecdote of this gentleman, as honourable to him as a man, as it was creditable to him as a member of that learned and honourable profession of which he was so great an ornament. Mr. Biddle had been specially retained to defend a cause in the state of Delaware, and had received as his retaining fee twenty half joes, an extravagant sum in those days. After listening some time to the arguments and proofs on the opposite side, he was so convinced of the unprincipled conduct of his client, that he left the court, and returned the fee, telling him to find another advocate, as he could not for any consideration consent to become an instrument of injustice.

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sons: he was speaker of the last assembly of Pennsylvania, under the proprietory government, and in the dawn of the revolution devoted himself to the cause of his country, and successfully opposed the overbearing influence of Joseph Galloway: ardent, eloquent, and full of zeal, by his exertions, during several days and nights of obstinate, warm and animated discussion, in extreme sultry weather, he overheated himself, and brought on an inflammatory rheumatism and a surfeit, which radically destroyed his health, and ultimately deprived society of one of its greatest ornaments, and his country of a statesman, a patriot and a soldier; for he had served several campaigns in the war of 1756, and if his health had been spared, would no doubt have occupied the second or third place in the revolutionary armies. I had another acquaintance in Reading, a contemporary whose independence of sentiment and manly deportment, had attracted my attention and engaged my esteem during my residence in Philadelphia; but exclusive of his personal merits, a congeniality of feeling and parity of predicament, as it regarded a passion which above all others most interests the youthful heart, had produced a confidential intimacy, the recollection of which at this distant day awakens the sweetest sensibilities of my bosom; and I know not whether I compliment the living or the dead, when I declare that I have rarely met with a man of more refined honour, a more feeling heart, or more polished manners than Alexander Graydon, esq.; and from this gentleman, during my visit at Reading, I again heard that General Conway had expressed himself freely and publicly of General Washington's unfitness for command.

and Alexander Graydon.

I proceeded from Reading to the camp of the grand army at White Marsh, where I was received and treated with kindness and attention by the commander in chief, who made various inquiries of me respecting the northern campaign, the conduct of individuals and the operations of the two armies, and most especially and earnestly of the movement of the troops, on which subject I could

Wilkinson visits the grand army.

Reception by General Washington.

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Interview with General Conway.

give him no satisfaction; whilst at this camp I was visited by General Conway, a stranger, with whom I never spoke before or since; he took me aside and inquired whether I had seen a letter of his to General Gates, containing certain expressions relative to General Washington's military conduct; he stated the expressions to me and informed me that General Washington had charged him with having made use of expressions derogatory to his professional character. I recollected the letter, but I did not think the language accorded with that then expressed to me, by General Conway, and I answered him to that effect; little suspecting that I was to be implicated in the affair. After this explanation, General Conway remarked, that he surely had a right to give his private opinion of any officer's conduct, and informed me that he had justified the sentiments imputed to him; and there our conversation ended.

I shall close this chapter with a continuation of the interesting narrative of the Baroness of Reidesel, which will convey to my readers a faint but correct view, of the disgusting scenes and the horrors of war.

Narrative of the Baroness of Reidesel continued.

Narrative of the Baroness of Reidesel.

"As soon as the funeral service was finished and the grave of General Fraser was closed, an order was issued that the army should retreat. My calash was prepared, but I would not consent to go before the troops. Major Harnage, although suffering from his wounds, crept from his bed as he did not wish to remain in the hospital, which was left with a flag of truce. When General Reidesel saw me in the midst of danger, he ordered my women and children to be brought into the calash, and intimated to me, to depart without delay. I still prayed to remain, but my husband knowing my weak side, said, "well then your children must go, that at least they may be safe from danger." I then agreed to enter the calash with them, and we set off at 8 o'clock.

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"The retreat was ordered to be conducted with the greatest silence, many fires were lighted and several tents left standing; we travelled continually during the night. At 6 o'clock in the morning we halted, which excited the surprise of all; General Burgoyne had the cannon ranged and counted; this delay seemed to displease every body, for if we could only have made another good march, we should have been in safety. My husband, quite exhausted with fatigue, came into my calash and slept for three hours; during that time Captain Willoe brought me a bag full of bank notes, and Captain Geismar his elegant watch, a ring, and a purse full of money, which they requested me to take care of, and which I promised to do to the utmost of my power. We again marched, but had scarcely proceeded an hour before we halted, as the enemy was in sight; it proved to be only a reconnoitring party of 200 men, who might easily have been made prisoners, if General Burgoyne had given proper orders on the occasion.

"The Indians had now lost their courage and were departing for their homes; these people appeared to droop much under adversity, and especially when they had no prospect of plunder. One of my waiting women was in a state of despair which approached to madness, she cursed and tore her hair, and when I attempted to reason with her and to pacify her, she asked me if I was not grieved at our situation, and upon my saying, "I was," she tore her cap off her head and let her hair drop over her face, saying to me, "it is very easy for you to be composed and talk, you have your husband with you, I have none, and what remains to me but the prospect of perishing or losing all I have;" I again bade her to take comfort, and assured her I would make good whatever she might happen to lose, and I made the same promise to Ellen, my other waiting woman, who though filled with apprehensions, made no complaints.

"About evening we arrived at Saratoga; my dress was wet through and through with rain, and in that state I had to remain the whole night, having no place to change

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it; I however got close to a large fire, and at last lay down on some straw. At this moment General Phillips came up to me and I asked him why we had not continued our retreat, as my husband had promised to cover it and bring the army through? "Poor dear woman," said he, "I wonder how, drenched as you are, you have the courage still to persevere and venture further in this kind of weather; I wish," continued he, "you was our commanding general, General Burgoyne is tired and means to halt here to-night and give us our supper."

On the morning of the 7th at 10 o'clock, General Burgoyne ordered the retreat to be continued, and caused the handsome houses and mills of General Schuyler to be burnt, we marched however but a short distance and then halted. The greatest misery at this time prevailed in the army, and more than thirty officers came to me, for whom tea and coffee was prepared, and with whom I shared all my provisions, with which my calash was in general well supplied; for I had a cook, who was an excellent caterer, and who often in the night crossed small rivers and foraged on the inhabitants, bringing in with him sheep, small pigs and poultry, for which he very often forgot to pay, though he received good pay from me, as long as I had any, and was ultimately handsomely rewarded. Our provisions now failed us for want of proper conduct in the commissary's department, and I began to despair. About 2 o'clock in the afternoon we again heard a firing of cannon and small arms, instantly all was alarm and every thing in motion. My husband told me to go to a house not far off, I immediately seated myself in my calash with my children and drove off, but scarcely had we reached it, before I discovered five or six armed men on the other side of the Hudson; instinctively I threw my children down in the calash and then concealed myself with them; at that moment the fellows fired and wounded an already wounded English soldier, who was behind me; poor fellow I pitied him exceedingly but at that moment had no means or power to relieve him. A terrible cannonade was commenced by the enemy

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which was directed against the house in which I sought to obtain shelter for myself and children, under the mistaken idea that all the Generals were in it. Alas, it contained none but wounded, and women; we were at last obliged to resort to the cellar for refuge, and in one corner of this I remained the whole day, my children sleeping on the earth with their heads in my lap, and in the same situation I passed a sleepless night. Eleven cannon balls passed through the house, and we could distinctly hear them roll away. One poor soldier who was lying on a table, for the purpose of having his leg amputated, was struck by a shot which carried away his other: his comrades had left him, and when we went to his assistance we found him in a corner of the room, into which he had crept more dead than alive, scarcely breathing. My reflections on the danger to which my husband was exposed now agonised me exceedingly, and the thoughts of my children and the necessity of struggling for their preservation alone sustained me.

"The ladies of the army who were with me were, Mrs. Harnage, a Mrs. Kennels the widow of a Lieutenant who was killed, and the lady of the commissary. Major Harnage, his wife, and Mrs. Kennels, made a little room in a corner with curtains to it and wished to do the same for me, but I preferred being near the door in case of fire. Not far off my woman slept, and opposite to us three English officers who though wounded were determined not to be left behind; one of them was Captain Green an aid-de-camp to Major-general Phillips, a very valuable officer and most agreeable man. They each made me a most sacred promise not to leave me behind, and in case of a sudden retreat, that they would each of them take one of my children on his horse, and for myself, one of my husband's was in constant readiness.

"Our cook, who I have before mentioned, procured us our meals, but we were in want of water, and I was often obliged to drink wine and to give it to my children. It was the only thing my husband took, which made our faithful hunter (Rockel) express one day his apprehen-

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sions, that "the General was weary of his life, or fearful of being taken, as he drank so much wine." The constant danger which my husband was in, kept me in a state of wretchedness, and I asked myself if it was possible I should be the only happy one, and have my husband spared to me unhurt, exposed as he was to so many perils. He never entered his tent, but laid down whole nights by the watch fires, this alone was enough to have killed him, the cold was so intense.

"The want of water distressed us much, at length we found a soldier's wife, who had courage enough to fetch us some from the river, an office nobody else would undertake, as the Americans shot at every person who approached it, but out of respect for her sex they never molested her.

"I now occupied myself through the day in attending the wounded; I made them tea and coffee and often shared my dinner with them, for which they offered me a thousand expressions of gratitude. One day a Canadian officer came to our cellar, who had scarcely the power of holding himself upright, and we concluded he was dying for want of nourishment; I was happy in offering him my dinner which strengthened him, and procured me his friendship. I now undertook the care of Major Bloomfield,* another aid-de-camp of General Phillips, he had received a musket ball through both cheeks, which in its course, had knocked out several of his teeth, and cut his tongue, he could hold nothing in his mouth, the matter which ran from his wound almost choaked him, and he was not able to take any nourishment except a little soup or something liquid; we had some Rhenish wine, and in the hope that the acidity of it would cleanse his wound, I gave him a bottle of it, he took a little now and then and with such effect, that his cure soon followed; thus I added another to my stock of friends, and derived a satisfaction

* Now member of Parliament for Plymouth, major-general in the army, lieutenant-colonel of the royal artillery, chief equerry and clerk martial to the king.

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which in the midst of sufferings served to tranquilise me and diminish their acuteness. CHAP. VIII.

"One day General Phillips accompanied my husband, at the risk of their lives, on a visit to us, who, after having witnessed our situation, said to him, "I would not for 10,000 guineas come again to this place, my heart is almost broken."

"In this horrid situation we remained six days, a cessation of hostilities was now spoken of and eventually took place; a convention was afterwards agreed upon, but one day a message was sent to my husband, who had visited me and was reposing in my bed, to attend a council of war, where it was proposed to break the convention, but to my great joy, the majority was for adhering to it; on the 16th, however, my husband had to repair to his post and I to my cellar; this day fresh beef was served out to the officers, who until now had only salt provision, which was very bad for their wounds. The good woman who brought us water, made us an excellent soup of the meat, but I had lost my appetite and took nothing but crusts of bread dipped in wine. The wounded officers (my unfortunate companions) cut off the best bit and presented it to me on a plate, I declined eating any thing, but they contended that it was necessary for me to take nourishment, and declared they would not touch a morsel, until I afforded them the pleasure of seeing me partake; I could no longer withstand their pressing invitations, accompanied as they were by assurances of the happiness they had in offering me the first good thing they had in their power, and I partook of a repast rendered palatable by the kindness and good will of my fellow-sufferers, forgetting for the moment the misery of our apartment and the absence of almost every comfort.

"On the 17th October the convention was completed. General Burgoyne and the other generals waited on the American general (Gates); the troops laid down their arms, and gave themselves up prisoners of war! and now the good woman who had supplied us with water at the hazard of her life, received the reward of her services;

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each of us threw a handful of money into her apron, and she got altogether about twenty guineas. At such a moment as this, how susceptible is the heart of feelings of gratitude!

"My husband sent a message to me to come over to him with my children. I seated myself once more in my dear calash, and then rode through the American camp. As I passed on, I observed (and this was a great consolation to me,) that no one eyed me with looks of resentment, but that they all greeted us, and even shewed compassion in their countenances, at the sight of a woman with small children. I was, I confess, afraid to go over to the enemy, as it was quite a new situation to me. When I drew near the tents, a handsome man approached and met me, *took my children from the calash, and hugged and kissed them, which affected me almost to tears.* "You tremble," said he, addressing himself to me, "be not afraid." "No," I answered, "you seem so kind and tender to my children, it inspires me with courage." He now led me to the tent of General Gates, where I found Generals Burgoyne and Phillips, who were on a friendly footing with the former. Burgoyne said to me, "Never mind, your sorrows have now an end." I answered him that I should be reprehensible to have any cares, as he had none; and I was pleased to see him on such a friendly footing with General Gates. All the generals remained to dine with General Gates.

"The same gentleman who received me so kindly, now came and said to me, "You will be very much embarrassed to eat with all these gentlemen; *Come with your children to my tent, where I will prepare for you a frugal dinner, and give it with a free will.*" I said, "You ARE CERTAINLY A HUSBAND AND A FATHER, *you have shewn me so much kindness.*" I now found that he was GENERAL SCHUYLER. He treated me with excellent smoked tongue, beef steaks, potatoes, and good bread and butter! Never could I have wished to eat a better dinner: I was content: I saw all around me were so likewise; and what was better than all, my husband was

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out of danger! When we had dined, he told me his residence was at Albany, and that General Burgoyne intended to honour him as his guest, and invited myself and children to do so likewise. I asked my husband, how I should act; he told me to accept the invitation. As it was two days' journey there, he advised me to go to a place which was about three hours ride distant. General Schuyler had the politeness to send with me a French officer, a very agreeable man, who commanded the reconnoitring party of which I have before spoken; and when he had escorted me to the house where I was to remain, he turned back again. In the house I found a French surgeon, who had under his care a Brunswick officer, who was mortally wounded, and died some days afterwards. The Frenchman boasted much of the care he took of his patient, and perhaps was skilful enough as a surgeon, but otherwise was a mere simpleton: he was rejoiced when he found out I could speak his language, and began to address many empty and impertinent speeches to me; said, among other things, he could not believe that I was a general's wife, as he was certain a woman of such rank would not follow her husband: he wished me to remain with him, as he said it was better to be with the conquerors than the conquered. I was shocked at his impudence, but dared not shew the contempt and disdain I felt for him, because it would deprive me of a place of safety! Towards evening he begged me to take a part of his chamber: I told him I was determined to remain in the room with the wounded officers; whereupon he attempted to pay me some stupid compliments. *At this moment the door opened, and my husband with his aid-de-camp entered.* I then said "Here, Sir, is my husband;" and at the same time eyed him with scorn, whereupon he retired abashed; nevertheless he was *so polite* as to offer his chamber to us.

"Some days after this we arrived at Albany, where we so often wished ourselves; but we did not enter it as we expected we should—victors! We were received *by the good General Schuyler, his wife and daughters,* not as

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enemies, but kind friends, and they treated us with the most marked attention and politeness, as they did General Burgoyne, who had caused General Schuyler's beautifully finished house to be burnt; in fact they behaved like persons of exalted minds, who determined to bury all recollection of *their own* injuries in the contemplation of *our* misfortunes. General Burgoyne was struck with General Schuyler's generosity, and said to him, "*You shew me great kindness, although I have done you much injury.*" "*That was the fate of war,*" replied the brave man, "*let us say no more about it.*"

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CHAPTER IX.

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Reflections on the rise and progress of revolutions.—Condition of the American colonists at the commencement of their revolution.—The sentiments by which they were animated.—The years 1775 and 1776, the golden æra of America.—A contrary spirit marked the years 1777 and 1778.—Its continuance and the danger it threatens to the United States.—General Wilkinson visits the camp at White Marsh.—Battle of Germantown the principal topic of conversation.—Various opinions on that subject.—General Greene the chief object of jealousy.—His character.—Gen. Wilkinson sets out for Albany, bearing letters from Generals Armstrong, St. Clair and Wayne.—Reflections on those letters and on the battle of Germantown.—Arrives at Albany 8th December.—His reception by General Gates.—Colonel Hamilton's mission to Albany.—Correspondence explaining the objects of his mission.—Conversation between General Gates and Wilkinson, on the subject of a letter of General Conway's.—Letters from General Mifflin to General Gates, and of General Gates to General Conway, on that subject.—General Gates appointed president of the Board of War, and departs for the seat of government.—General Wilkinson's letter to General Gates, on the subject of the convention of Saratoga.—Wilkinson departs for Fort Schuyler, to inspect and muster the troops.—Visits the Oneida village.—Improvements of the western part of the state of New York.—Appeal to the citizens of that state.—Wilkinson returns to Albany.—Is advised by letter of his appointment as secretary to the Board of War.—Correspondence with Lord Sterling.—Reflections thereon.—Leaves Albany, and arrives at Reading.—Arrives at Lancaster on the 21st, and is informed of General Gates having denounced him for betraying General Con-

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way's letter to General Washington.—Perplexity of Wilkinson's situation.—Disparity of age and rank between General Gates and Wilkinson considered.—Remarks on the correspondence with Lord Sterling.—Correspondence with General Gates.—Wilkinson proceeds to York-town.—Requests Captain Stoddert to bear a message to General Gates, which he refuses.—Wilkinson's resolution unshaken.—Parts with Captain Stoddert and meets Colonel Ball, who he prevails on to carry a message to General Gates.—Gates's reception of that gentleman.—Captain Stoddert arrives from General Gates, requesting an interview.—At the instance of the former, Wilkinson consents.—Interview, and explanation on the part of General Gates.—Wilkinson meets Gates at the war office, in consequence of a previous arrangement.—Wilkinson proceeds to Lancaster, on his way to Valley Forge.—Remonstrance of the brigadiers and colonels, against Conway's and Wilkinson's promotion.—Reflections thereon.—Minutes of Congress, recording Wilkinson's resignation.——Wilkinson arrives at Valley Forge.—Requests Colonel Moylan to deliver a peremptory message to Lord Sterling.—The latter proposes another mode of proceeding.—Wilkinson's confidence in Colonel Moylan, induces him to adopt it.—Letters to and from Lord Sterling.—Observations thereon.—Extracts from General Washington's letter to Gen. Gates.—General Washington's letter to Lord Sterling, March 21st, 1778.—Wilkinson refuses General Washington's invitation.—Is again invited, and assigns his reasons for refusing.—Receives a message from General Washington, stating the subject upon which he wishes to see him.—Waits on General Washington.—The conversation which ensued.—Exposition of General Washington's correspondence with General Gates.—Reflections thereon, and Lord Sterling's communications to General Washington.—Reference to Gordon's History and Graydon's Memoirs.—Extract of a letter from General Lee to General Gates.—Wilkinson resigns his appointment of secretary to the Board of War.—Is appointed

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clothier-general of the army, and his reasons for accepting the appointment.—Course prescribed to him in writing these memoirs.

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Reflections on the rise and progress of revolutions.

THE motives which lead to political revolutions may originate in the pride of family, in personal wrongs or private ambition, but most frequently they grow out of the abuse of power. The subordinate agents and actors in revolutionary scenes, but imperfectly comprehend the grounds of controversy, and are guided more by the current of opinion than principle and intelligence. Popular commotions are impressive; but a national convulsion, like an irresistible torrent, sweeps every thing along with it, and the votaries of the public cause co-operate without inquiry; it rouses all the active energies and generous emotions of the heart, which it swells with enthusiasm, and leaves nothing to sordid calculations; and when the motives are just, and the direction temperate, a state of revolution is the most seducing on earth.

Condition of the American colonists at the commencement of the revolution.

Such was the condition of the American colonists at the commencement of their contest with the parent state, when, with a few exceptions, all heads, hands and hearts were united for the protection of common interests and the attainment of specific objects. Strangers to local distinctions and personal factions, the American community exhibited an unity of sentiment and action, which influenced their private transactions, and controlled their public deliberations. With "liberty or death" for their motto, they were ready to throw their property into a common stock; the only competition among them was in contributions to the public weal; and the resolutions of Congress were more strictly obeyed and more punctually executed, than the most solemn laws of the best regulated governments in the world.

The years 1775, 1776, might properly be styled the golden æra of the American revolution; when hardships and perils blended the fortunes of all, and bound them together by the strongest ties of sympathy and self defence. But alas! this disinterested union and harmonious accord,

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Change in 1777-8.

was soon, too soon, dissolved, by that foolish impulse, which armed brother against brother, and shed the first blood of man. Security begot dissension, and prosperity ambition; the sudden accumulation of individual fortunes by licensed sea robbers, excited the sordid passions; a spirit of venal speculation overspread the whole country, and personal factions and political intrigues distinguished the years 1777 and 1778, infected private confidence and poisoned public concord, and then the iron age of these United States began, which has unfortunately flourished with unexampled vigour, and in the short space of forty years furnishes abundant cause of apprehension for the safety of the constitution, that palladium of liberty, purchased by the best blood of the country.

I had now reached a period when neither political integrity, personal probity, patriotic zeal, nor innocence of life could shield me against envy, jealousy, suspicion and perfidy. *My youth* then furnished objections to my unsolicited promotion, and *my age* has since afforded President Madison *a pretext* for turning me out of the service: and thus it appears, that from *youth to age* I have been a subject of persecution; yet it is my pride and my boast that my life has been devoted to my country.

General Wilkinson visits the camp at White Marsh. Battle of Germantown, and the various opinions on that subject.

At the time I visited the camp at White Marsh the army had been unfortunate in various conflicts, and military misfortunes are the infallible sources of discontent. The battle of Germantown was then the prevailing topic of conversation; a successful onset had inspired the belief that the attack might have been conducted to a triumphant termination; in searching for the causes of discomfiture, opinions were diversified, some charging it to the tardy movements of the left, others to defective vigour on the right, but those who had been most warmly engaged, ascribed it the halt of the centre at Chew's house, which was imputed to the counsellors of the commander in chief, who were condemned with little reserve, and among them I perceived General Greene was the most prominent object of jealousy; a gentleman in whom General Washington always found a safe and able adviser, and the country

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a cautious but most efficient General; and if true valour be estimated by calm self-possession, decision and vigour in the hour of peril, his title to that quality was established in the battles of Guildford and Eutaw, which furnish his proper eulogy; whilst his constancy, forecast, resource and arrangements, in the most active scenes and critical exigencies of the war, proclaim this pupil of Washington to be the first captain of his day.

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His character.

I remained with the grand army until the 22d November, when I set out for Albany, the head quarters of General Gates, bearing letters from Generals Armstrong,* St. Clair and Wayne, which I shall here present to the reader, to illustrate the feelings of the army respecting the battle of Germantown, and furnish him an idea of the state of public affairs at that interesting epoch; and with the same motives, I shall introduce a previous letter from General Armstrong, of the 9th October.

"*Camp near the Trapp, 9th Oct.* 1777.

"Dear General,

"Three days ago I wrote you at greater length than I at present can do, but find through hurrying in the night, I have sent your letter to some other gentleman.

"On the fourth instant General Washington attacked the enemy, marching his troops by various routes about fifteen miles the preceding night. The British troops were encamped chiefly at Germantown, the foreigners principally betwixt the Falls of Schuylkill and John Van Deering's mill, we could not take off (as was designed) but beat the enemy's pickets, so that the surprise was not total but partial. At the head of Germantown the continental troops attacked with vigour, and drove the British who frequently rallied and were drove again and again about the space of two miles, when *some unhappy spirit of infatuation* seized our troops almost universally,

* The hero of Kittaning in the war of 1756; father of the late Secretary of war, and one of the most virtuous men who has lived in any age or country.

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whereby they began to retreat and fled in wild disorder unknown to the General, that is without his orders and beyond his power to prevent. So that a victory, a glorious victory, fought for and eight-tenths won, was shamefully but mysteriously lost, for no one to this moment can or at least will give any good reason for the flight. The conjectures are these, the morning was foggy and so far unfavourable. It is said ours took the manœuvres of part of our own people, for large reinforcements of the enemy, and thereby took fright at themselves or at one another. Some unhappy officer is said to have called out *we are surrounded, we are surrounded.* The enemy also in their flight, I mean part of them, took into a church, and a large body into Mr. Chew's Germantown house, where, on our part, an ill-judged delay was made, and the troops impeded in their warm pursuit. There a flag was sent in, insulted, and the bearer wounded, where also a number of our people fell by the wall pieces and musketry of the house, which proved too strong for the metal of our field pieces.

"I hope to send you a copy of our order of march and attack, and of our loss, the return not being fully made when I was last at head quarters, which is fourteen miles from me, but am to join again to-morrow. My destiny was against the foreigners, rather to divert them with the militia, than fight their superior body, however we attempted both, until the General seeing his men retreat, sent for me, with the division. I followed a slow cannonade several miles but found him not, fell in the rear of the enemy, still supposing them a vanquished party and that we had victory, though the firing was then counter, we gave them a brush, but their artillery so well directed soon obliged us to file off, near two hours after our troops had left the field. I lost but three, and nine wounded. On the other hand, every intelligence from town assures us that the continental troops in the morning gave the enemy a severe drubbing. General Agnew killed. Grant and Sir Will. Erskine wounded, with some Colonels. The hospital and some churches crowded with their wounded.

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The triumphant torys again struck to the centre, and the drooping spirits of the whigs again relieved. *Thus God supports our otherwise sinking spirits,* which were also animated by your northern success. Before this I hope my son has joined and given you the Brandywine story and succeeding movements. *This last effort though in* PART *unfortunate, is a great and happy thing,* and still greater things depend on the next. May heaven indulgent give it success.

"I am with compliments to your suite,

"Dear General,

"Affectionately yours,

"JOHN ARMSTRONG.

"*Major-general Gates.*"

"*Camp at White Marsh, 13 miles from Philadelphia, 20th Nov.* 1777.

"Dear General,

"Notwithstanding the worst disposition for writing and the marching orders of this day, I must not decline this natural opportunity, of testifying not only my own but the high pleasure of our army and all friends of liberty, amounting with many even to rapture, in consequence of the success of your exertions and those of your brave army on the 15th ult.; a victory this, but seldom granted to man! *characteristic of the Supreme Agent, and evidential of his high favour to the American cause.* May God who gave it deliver you, the feeble instrument, (as from corporal enemies he has done) from the sable attacks to which you must stand exposed on the high pinnacle of fame, from which watchfulness and humility only can hand you down in safety, *whilst gratitude and giving God glory will best establish your feet.*

"On our general and very important affairs here, I hope the young gentleman who will deliver this may be able to say almost the whole. The enemy have thrown a curved line of redoubts from Schuylkill to Delaware, and chiefly filled the intermediate spaces by abbatis. They are stronger, and were so at landing, than we ge-

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nerally believed. They are now about 9,000 effectives, besides the reinforcement just arrived from York. Our number in continental troops, until now the reinforcements come in, were considerably inferior to the enemy. I hope a few days will lead us to push them from their strong redoubts; we are promised that pleasure, with the additional compliments of being chased over the mountains as soon as the shipping is brought up. Fort Island, after a brave resistance, we have lately lost. Lord Cornwallis, with some troops from Philadelphia and Clinton's reinforcement, are now on the enterprise of taking Red bank. We have detached in aid of that garrison. As to the spot its now of no consequence to us, the little fleet having determined to move up the Delaware. We are ill clothed, the winter is on, to hut near the enemy will be arduous, is dangerous; to return back for quarters and thereby leave the country open, appears to be intolerable. These are the outlines of our situation at present; hoping for some favourable opening whereby the campaign may be closed with reputation, *God only can give it.* Our troops express their wishes for another trial, and must be greatly animated by the arrival of your's. We have about 2,500 militia of this state, and about 800 from Maryland, about this number will remain for some weeks yet, but they are ever fluctuating. I presume, *Johnny** will wish to see Carlisle this winter, if consistent with your situation.

"I am, Dear General, with great truth,
"Most cordially your's,
"JOHN ARMSTRONG.

"*Major-general Gates.*"

"*Camp at White Marsh, Nov. 21st, 1777.*

"Dear General,

"Though my congratulations on your signal success come rather late, they are not the less sincere. Sickness in my family had called me away from the army, and

* Late Secretary of War.

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I was absent when the news of General Burgoyne's surrender arrived, an event glorious to you, and that must be attended with the most happy consequences to America, and it affords me the greater pleasure, as you was the happy instrument in bringing it to pass. This, my dear General, is not the language of compliment but of the heart. I am not used to make professions, but I ever shall be interested in your good or bad fortune, as I have not forgot nor ever shall forget, the friendship I have received at your hands.

"The battle of Germantown happened in my absence. I can give you little account of it. There was strange mismanagement, and it has produced infinite courts martial and as we have been inactive ever since, seems to have impressed us with a sense of the superiority of the British troops; that gives me much concern; it is certain our discipline and our numbers too are inferior to theirs, but when your victorious troops arrive they will make our scale preponderate; but what can delay them so? Morgan has been arrived above a fortnight.

"The fort on Mud Island was evacuated on the 16th instant, at midnight, (one of the enemy's ships lying within pistol shot of it at the time) after having sustained a siege of near seven weeks. It is a very singular event that such a thing, the veriest *bicoque* that ever was erected should have retarded the operations of an army of twelve or fourteen thousand men and a great fleet so long. Colonel Smith* (a son of your friend Mr. Smith of Baltimore,) has acquired immortal honour in defence of it. The cheveaux de frize are not yet removed, nor will they be, so long as we maintain the Jersey shore, but that I fear will not long be the case, as the troops from New York are landed at Billingsport, and a large detachment from Philadelphia under the command of Lord Cornwallis has joined them; Greene, however, with his division has marched to oppose them, and he has likewise Varnum's brigade.

"My affair is still in the same situation as when I last

* General Samuel Smith, the defender of the city of Baltimore.

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wrote you. I am firmly persuaded it is the intention of Congress to avoid bringing it to a trial as long as possible, in hopes that the matter will die away of itself and be forgotten; that however is not my intention. I have been pretty constant in my applications for justice to myself, and to my country, and shall continue them until I prevail or they throw off the mask. It is melancholy that a body lately so august, so truly venerable, should in so short time be so visibly altered; if the degeneracy continues, (*and when intriguing and cabal takes root in public assemblies, it generally continues and increases,*) I cannot tell what may be the consequences, nor do I like to imagine them; but this is certain, never since this great contest began, had we more need of upright, uncorrupted, wise and disinterested counsels and counsellors, for we are arrived at the crisis or very near it. This train of thought does not arise altogether from what has happened to myself, but from a retrospect of the causes that has brought us to a situation, in which we can with great difficulty get either forward or backward.

"This moment I have a letter from the President covering the following very extraordinary resolve,

"*Whereas, the committee appointed to inquire into the causes of the loss of Ticonderoga and Fort Independence, have not yet been able to collect materials, and make their report.* RESOLVED, *that Major-general St. Clair be at liberty to attend to his private affairs until he shall have notice to attend head quarters, in order to an inquiry into his conduct.*"

"Judge now, Sir, what I ought to think of them, for I made no such application as this would indicate, or whether the suspicion I threw out above is not but too well founded. If they had candour or common honesty, they would have owned, that after five months spent in searching for an accusation, they had been unable to find one; one at least that they dared to own; and instead of commanding me to retire from the army, which is the English of the resolve, with all the ignominy upon my head that they had unjustly endeavoured to fix there,

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could have acknowledged their error, and done what was in their power to remove it; but many of them are incapable of *a generous sentiment or action in private life; and a public station, by making men more acquainted with the views and frailties of others, confirms and increases their own;* a trial however they shall give me; be the event what it will, they cannot rob me of that heartfelt satisfaction, which is the companion and reward of virtuous actions.

"I shall leave the camp to-morrow, but shall not cease to pray to God to avert those calamities to my country, that may ever make my feeble assistance necessary.

"I had a great deal more to say, but this cursed resolve has deranged all my ideas; adieu my dear General.

"I ever am, your very affectionate,

"Humble servant,

"ARTHUR ST. CLAIR.

"*P. S.* I am extremely happy at Wilkinson's promotion, and thank you very heartily for procuring it.

"He has great merit, and what is in my opinion more valuable, *he has a warm honest heart. I have known many an errant knave with considerable abilities.*

"*Major-general Gates.*"

"*Camp at White Marsh, 21st Nov.* 1777.

"My Dear General,

"I most sincerely congratulate you on the unparalleled success of our arms under your conduct, which has surpassed even our most sanguine hopes, and which must eventually save this (otherwise) devoted country.

"Fortune to us has proved a fickle goddess; although at one time she wore a pleasing aspect, but like some other females changed for the first new face she saw. I can't say we treated her so kindly as she deserved; we slighted in an idle moment some of her best favours; I wish we had not done it more than once; for she more than once presented them.

"Before the battle of the Brandywine we had a most delightful opening, we neglected making the proper use of it. In the Great Valley the enemy took, and remain-

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ed in, the most injudicious camp that ever troops sat down in. The hills on each side were not more than a mile asunder; they in the hollow and the hills the strongest ground I ever saw, the Schuylkill in front and unfordable; the country all open to receive us in case of a misfortune; we risked but little, the enemy their all. At Germantown fortune again smiled on our arms for full three hours; the enemy were broke, dispersed, and flying in all quarters, we were in possession of their whole encampment, together with their artillery park, &c. &c. A windmill attack was made on a house, into which six light companies had thrown themselves to avoid our bayonets; this gave the enemy time to rally, our troops were deceived by the attack, taking it for something formidable, they fell back to assist in what they deemed a serious affair; the enemy finding themselves no further pursued, and believing it to be a retreat, followed; confusion ensued, and we ran away from the arms of victory ready open to receive us.

"We have lost Fort Mifflin, *alias* Mud Island, after an investiture of six weeks, without any attempt to raise the siege; the consequence of which, will be the loss of all our other works and shipping in the river, and will give easy winter quarters to Mr. Howe and his army, whilst we shall be reduced to the hard necessity of making a winter's campaign in the open field with naked troops, or give up the greatest part of this once happy state to be subjugated and laid under contribution. I have thus given you a true picture of our present situation, over which I wish to draw a veil until our arms produce one more lovely, which I don't yet despair of, if our worthy General will but follow his own good judgment without listening too much *to some counsel.*

"I wish to hear from you whenever you can find time from your more important business.

"Wilkinson will give you a full history of men and measures, adieu my Dear General, and believe me,

"Your's most sincerely,

"ANTHONY WAYNE.

"*Hon. General Gates.*"

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From these letters, the variety and perplexity of opinions and the discontents which ensued the battle of Germantown, may be fairly comprehended. Nor should this be a matter of surprise, for it is well known to every military man of judgment and experience, that from the platoon to the regiment, the officer who in combat performs his duty faithfully, has too much to do to give attention beyond his neighbouring regiment or platoon, particularly in broken grounds, and under the obscurity of night or a dense fog; yet it is notorious that in our service, "the battle once ended," its details are canvassed and its merits fought over and over again, with equal loquacity, pertinacity and *skill*, as well by the youngest ensign as the oldest brigadier, upon grounds, principles and actions, as diversified as the faces of the critics and commentators; such was the situation of the army at White Marsh in November, 1777; and I offer those remarks to the candour of the present army, in the hope they may tend to restrain the license of the subordinate ranks, and check the garrulity of at least two major-generals, with whom I should be sorry to compare the distinguished chiefs I have just quoted.

But it will be seen that General Armstrong was deceived in point of fact, and at a loss for the causes of the failure; General St. Clair speaks of the litigious disposition and discontents of the camp; and General Wayne's Cæsarian spirit could not brook the Fabian system of General Washington, which saved his country from heavy calamities; ardent, valorous and panting for fame, like Clairfait,* he was ever ready for the combat, and as an executive officer, would have done honour to the first service of the world. General Washington well understood his worth and duly estimated it, and no officer more highly respected the commander in chief than General Wayne; His letter is a compliment to his professional enterprise, and having led the attack, and participated in the heat

* General Moreau informed me that Clairfait never refused a battle, and when his antagonist desired a combat, he had only to make a demonstration and Clairfait never failed him.

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of the battle of Germantown successfully, as he believed, against the main body of the enemy, it was very natural he should feel sore at the issue of the affair, the merits of which are little understood even at this day; and the glance which my limits permit me to take of it, in this place, will be confined to a few brief reflections, and the recital of several essential facts, on which the reader will be left to make his comments. General Washington's inability to resist the progress of an enemy, his superior in discipline, experience, appointments and numerical force, did not appal his resolution, or shake the firmness of his soul; and the misfortunes of 1776 had taught him how to sustain those of 1777; he watched the motions of his adversary, prepared to strike him, whenever an opportunity should present; and the security to which Sir William Howe gave himself up, after he got possession of Philadelphia, indicated by the distraction of his force, and the loose disposition of his main body in the neighbourhood of Germantown, made an opening which the American chief determined to embrace; whereby, as at Trenton, he re-animated the country, raised the spirits of his own troops, and diminished the confidence of the enemy.

But with deference to the judgment of my contemporaries, I do not consider the disposition of the attack the most judicious, particularly for the night, and with a large proportion of undisciplined militia; it was too widely extended* for strict concert, and too complicated for precise co-operation, on which the success of the enterprise essentially depended; nor can I believe that the composition, equipments, and numerical force under General Washington, warranted the expectation of the capture of the army under Sir William Howe; yet the principle of the attack evinced the wisdom of the projector, and, although it *could not* be so successful as at Trenton, it produced the most salutary effects to the country. It reminded Sir

* The front of General Washington's army on this movement, extended from the Old York to the Ridge road, over a space of at least four miles, intersected with hills and ravines, which rendered the communication exceedingly difficult.

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William Howe of the scenes of Trenton and Princeton, taught him to respect his antagonist, and inspired him with fear of an enemy whom he had despised. It forced him into Philadelphia, straitened his quarters, and *put him on the defensive;* and no more important consequences could have been produced, by the most sanguinary victory, short of an absolute conquest, of which I humbly conceive, there could be no prospect, and for the following considerations.

1st.—The main body of the British army encamped at Germantown the 3d October, 1777, occupied ground nearly at right angles with the street; the front line on the school-house lane to the west, and the church lane to the east, the park in the area south of the market-house, opposite to which, on the left, General Howe had his quarters, in the house of David Deshler; the second line formed a parallel about half a mile in rear, and flanking the road near the old six mile stone, before the door of H. Cunningham esq.; a detachment had marched to co-operate in the reduction of Fort Mifflin, and Lord Cornwallis with the grenadiers was quartered in Philadelphia; the advanced body of this army, consisting of the 2d battalion of British light infantry, with a respectable field train, occupied the height immediately in front of Beggars-town on the left of the road, and more than two miles from the main body, with an out-lying picket posted at the southern foot of Mount Airy, almost nine miles from the market-house of the city; the 40th regiment was encamped three-quarters of a mile in rear of the light infantry, in a field* of B. Chew esq. and eastward of his country seat.

2d.—If the darkness of the night, had deranged the march of the American troops, a very thick fog in the morning tended to keep up the distraction; that meritorious veteran Colonel Allen M'Lane, who for activity, enterprise, daring resolution, and efficient service, was surpassed by no officer of his grade in the revolution, at

* This fact is derived from Captain Campbell of that corps, who was wounded in defence of the house.

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that time a Captain, led the advanced patrole of the centre, and being well acquainted with the ground and the position of the enemy, attempted to surprise their picket, but fell in with double sentries, whom he killed with the loss of one man, and soon after routed the guard; the surprise was complete, and Wayne's brigade commenced the action with the British light infantry, who made a vigorous resistance, but were forced to retire, leaving their artillery on the ground, they however preserved some order and kept up a scattering fire as they fell back.

3d.—The picket of the 40th regiment was soon after attacked and retired on their encampment, when Lieutenant-colonel Musgrave, who commanded that corps, leaving his camp standing, threw himself into Mr. Chew's house; in the mean time General Wayne pressed the retreating light infantry, and continued to overthrow every thing in his way; our men expended their ammunition lavishly, which with raw troops in irregular actions is inevitable, soon run short, and a messenger was sent to the rear for a supply.

4th.—General Washington with General Sullivan and the troops who followed Wayne at this period had reached the vicinity of Mr. Chew's house, from the upper windows of which Musgrave was delivering a random fire at the corps passing on the road, who might be heard but could not be seen, because of the distance of the house from it, and the density of the fog; a consultation was held and it was determined to attack this house, by which a part of the centre column was halted, but this measure could have had no effect on the movements of those on the right and left. The doors and the shutters of the lower windows of this mansion were shut and fastened, the fire of the enemy being delivered from the iron gratings of the cellars and the windows above; and it was closely beset on all sides, with small arms and artillery, as is manifest from the multiplicity of traces still visible, from musket ball and grape shot on the interior walls

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and ceilings, which appear to have entered through the doors and windows in every direction; marks of cannon ball are also visible in several places on the exterior wall and through the roof, though one ball only appears to have penetrated below the roof, and that by a window in the passage of the second story. The artillery seems to have made no impression on the walls of the house, a few slight indentures only being observable, except from one stroke in the rear which started the wall. I have been informed that a Major White, aid-de-camp to General Sullivan, was mortally wounded by a shot from the cellar, in attempting to set fire to a window; and it was reported that Colonel Laurens, an aid-de-camp of General Washington, attempted with a party to force the main door; certain it is that door is much perforated, and it is evident that twenty or thirty shot were fired through it by the defendants. The most daring resolution was exerted to carry this building, but the perseverance of Musgrave baffled every effort.

5th.—These attacks being withdrawn, a parley was ordered to be beaten, and as Captain Smith of the Virginia line was advancing with a flag to demand a surrender, he was killed by a shot from the house.

During these operations before Mr. Chew's house, General Wayne continued to pursue the retreating enemy; General Armstrong was engaged with the Hessians near the Schuylkill; and a part of General Greene's column, had reached the church lane, and met the right wing of the enemy's front line; Colonel W. Stewart with his regiment, and Colonel George Mathews with the 9th Virginia regiment, got warmly engaged, though not in concert, and were soon overpowered; Stewart made good his retreat, but Matthews with his corps were taken prisoners. In the mean time Lord Cornwallis was advancing rapidly with the grenadiers, and the left wing of the British front line had got in motion under Generals Gray, and Agnew. At this critical juncture, the front of the American troops had nearly reached the market house,

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when hearing the parley* in rear, and mistaking it for the retreat, some one cried out, "They beat the retreat;" the exclamation spread like wild fire—a sudden panic ensued—and troops who had met with no check fled in wild disorder, in spite of the exertions of their officers to rally them. The fog still continued extremely heavy; the left column had become entangled and was falling back, and the right had made no impression.

6th.—With his corps in this state of distraction, if General Washington had pressed forward with the centre column, fatigued and exhausted of ammunition, he would have come into contact with the main body of the British army, fresh for action; and under such disparity of circumstances, it needs not the spirit of divination to say what would have been the consequence: for if we allow the 2d light infantry and the 40th regiment to consist of 1200 men, and 2000 for the detachment to Province island, Sir William Howe could certainly have brought 10,000 men into action, as he had landed 18,000,† only seventy days before, at the head of Elk, and had not suffered a heavy loss.

It has been reported, and it is generally believed, that General Agnew was killed in the action of Germantown, but nothing can be more incorrect: this officer had just marched with a brigade from the left wing of the British army to support the action, when our troops gave way;

* When a messenger reached the rear for ammunition, Captain Thomas Forrest (now Colonel) was near General Knox, who ordered him forward to give information that the ammunition wagons were at hand. This happened near Mr. Chew's house, some time after the attack, and as Forrest rode off he heard the proposition for beating a parley; and he had nearly got up with the front of the troops when the beat was made, and the consequences followed, under his immediate observation, which I have stated with his permission. The oldest troops in the world are liable to such unaccountable alarms.—The battle of Friedlingen furnishes a most extraordinary instance, where the victorious army of Marshal Villars, after beating and pursuing the Imperialists a considerable distance, upon a cry "*Que l'on etoit coupe*," were seized with a panic, turned about, and fled in disorder from their flying enemy.

† See Marshall.

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and advancing at the head of his column, a lurking party of two or three men, concealed behind the wall of the Baptist meeting house, at the foot of the acclivity north of the old 6th mile stone, fired on him, and he was mortally wounded by one of them, supposed to be Philip Boyer, who is still living; and as the fact may, peradventure, interest some relative of the murdered general, I will state in this place, that he was carried forward a short distance to a low stone house, on the left of the street, occupied at that time by Jacob Hall, and owned now by Henry Streeper, where the unfortunate man terminated his life, a victim to military ambition. CHAP. IX.

After the examination of these facts and circumstances, I cannot repress the belief that the halt at Chew's house, whatever may be its merits in a professional view, was another manifestation of the Divine interposition in behalf of these states; because if General Washington had met with no obstacle, he would, under the thickness of the fog, have closed with the main body of the enemy before he could have been apprised of its proximity, and then his centre and a part of his left wing would have been committed to a general action with the whole British army; the result of which I submit to the consideration of my readers.

The following general orders of Sir William Howe, may contribute to assist and satisfy inquiry, and they tend to support my deductions as to the effect of General Washington's attack of the 4th of October.

Extract from the General Orders of the army under the command of General Sir William Howe.

HEAD-QUARTERS GERMANTOWN.

After Orders—2 o'clock, September 29th, 1777.

"The 10th and 42d regiments to march this afternoon at 4 o'clock to Middle Ferry on the Schuylkill; the 42d to take with them the two 6 pounders from the third brigade."

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October 4th, 1777.

"Such corps as suspect they have left any wounded on the field, are immediately to send wagons with a small escort, to bring them to the hospital in Germantown.

"The wagons that go for provisions are to receive the wounded here to-morrow morning by seven, to carry them to the general hospital in town."

Morning Orders—October 5th.

"Each corps to send out patroles in their front this forenoon, to search for rebel arms, and take them to the artillery park, where the men will be paid for them agreeably to the regulation.

"All rebel prisoners and deserters to be immediately sent to the town guard in Germantown, in order to their being forwarded to Philadelphia.

"The commander in chief desires his public thanks may be given to the general officers, commanding officers of corps, and all the officers and soldiers that were yesterday engaged, for their alertness in getting under arms and good services in beating back and effectually routing the enemy, and desires his particular thanks to Lieutenant-colonel Musgrave, for his well judged and gallant defence of the house he took possession of with the 40th regiment.

"Returns of the killed, wounded, and missing of each corps in the action of yesterday, to be given in to the deputy adjutant-general this evening at gun firing, specifying the names and ranks of their killed and wounded officers.

"The first, second, third, and fourth brigades (British) are each to send a surgeon to Philadelphia immediately, to attend the sick and wounded of their respective corps, under the direction of the general hospital."

After Orders—October 5th.

"The park of artillery, the 5th and 55th regiments of second brigade, 15th, 17th and 44th of third, the fourth brigade, and two battalions of General Sterne's, will be in readiness to change their ground to-morrow. They will for that purpose send a quarter-master, and two

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camp-colourmen from each regiment, to attend the quarter-master general, at the head of the fourth brigade, at 7 o'clock in the morning." CHAP. IX.

October 7th.

"The commander in chief is determined to punish with the utmost rigour any person who gives a false alarm, or any sentry who improperly fires off his piece, to the disturbance of the camp and to the disgrace of the character of a soldier."

I arrived at Albany the 8th December, was received by General Gates with great cordiality, and entered on the functions of my station the 9th. Colonel Hamilton, aid-de-camp to General Washington, had preceded me under a mission from the commander in chief, the objects of which are explained in the following letters.

"*Camp near White Marsh, 15 miles from Philadelphia, Oct. 30th,* 1777.

"Sir,

"By this opportunity I do myself the pleasure to congratulate you on the signal success of the army under your command, in compelling General Burgoyne and his whole force to surrender themselves prisoners of war; an event that does the highest honour to the American arms, and which I hope will be attended with the most extensive and happy consequences. At the same time, I cannot but regret that a matter of such magnitude, and so interesting to our general operations, should have reached me by report only, or through the chance of letters, not bearing that authenticity which the importance of it required, and which it would have received, by a line under your signature, stating the simple fact. Correspondence explanatory of the objects of Colonel Hamilton's visit.

"Our affairs having terminated at the northward, I have, by the advice of the general officers, sent Colonel Hamilton, one of my aids, to lay before you a full state of our situation, and that of the enemy in this quarter; he is well informed upon the subject, and will deliver my sentiments upon the plan of operations that is now neces-

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sary to be pursued. I think it improper to enter into a particular detail, not knowing how matters are circumstanced on the North river, and fearing that by some accident my letter might miscarry. From Colonel Hamilton you will have a clear and comprehensive view of things, and I persuade myself you will do every thing in your power to facilitate the objects I have in contemplation.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"GO. WASHINGTON.

"*Major-general Gates.*"

"*Albany, Nov. 5th,* 1777.

"Sir,

"By inquiry I have learned that General Patterson's brigade, which is the one you propose to send, is by far the weakest of the three now here, and does not consist of more than about six hundred rank and file fit for duty. It is true there is a militia regiment with it of about two hundred, but the term of service for which this regiment is engaged is so near expiring, that it would be passed by the time the men could arrive at the place of their destination, and to send them would be to fatigue the men to no purpose. Under these circumstances, I cannot consider it either as compatible with the good of the service, or my instructions from his excellency General Washington, to consent that that brigade be selected from the three to go to him; but I am under the necessity of requiring, by virtue of my orders from him, that one of the others be substituted instead of this, either General Nixon's or General Glover's, and that you will be pleased to give immediate orders for its embarkation.

"Knowing that General Washington wished me to pay great deference to your judgment, I ventured so far to deviate from the instructions he gave me, as to consent, in compliance with your opinion, that two brigades should remain here instead of one; at the same time permit me to observe, that I am not myself sensible of the

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expediency of keeping more than one here, in conjunction with the detached regiments in the neighbourhood of the place; and that my ideas coincided with those of gentlemen whom I have consulted on the occasion, whose judgment I have more reliance upon than my own, and who must be supposed to have a thorough knowledge of the circumstances, necessary to enter into the question; their opinion is, that one brigade with the regiments before mentioned, would amply answer the purposes of this post. When I preferred your opinion to other considerations, I did not imagine you would pitch upon a brigade little more than half as large as the others, and finding this to be the case, I indispensably owe it to my duty, to desire in his excellency's name that another brigade may go instead of that intended. As it may be conducive to despatch that General Glover's brigade should be the one, if agreeable to you, you will give directions accordingly.

"I have the honour to be,
"With respect and esteem,
"Sir, your most obedient serv't.
"ALEX. HAMILTON, *A. D. C.*

"*P. S.*—If you think proper to order Glover's brigade, and will be pleased to send your orders to me, I will have them immediately forwarded.

"*Major-general Gates.*"

"*Albany, Nov. 7th*, 1777.

"Sir,

"After sending upwards of five thousand men to the succour of the southern army, I hoped a further draft from this department would have become unnecessary; but Colonel Hamilton acquaints me, it was the unanimous opinion of a council of war, that the whole of the eastern regiments should march from hence, and that troops were only to be stationed at Peeks-kill, and in the highlands, for the defence of the country this way. With the greatest deference to the opinion of the council of

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war, I must inform your excellency, that troops posted at Peeks-kill or in the highlands cannot prevent the enemy from destroying this city and arsenal, whenever they please to make the attempt; the passage being entirely unobstructed, a leading wind carries a fleet up the river, before it will be in the power of the force posted in the highlands to give any effectual opposition thereto, as General Putnam very lately experienced. Colonel Hamilton, after presenting me with your excellency's letter, verbally demanded that almost all of the troops now in this department, should be ordered to proceed directly for New Windsor. I told the Colonel, that your excellency's orders should be obeyed, but, that if my opinion was to be taken upon the subject, I was entirely averse to more than one brigade being sent from hence, as this city and arsenal was not secure with fewer troops than would then be left to guard them; and of course every good effect of the ruin of General Burgoyne's army totally lost, should the enemy succeed in an attempt to possess this town.

"Upon mature consideration of all circumstances, I have nevertheless ordered General Glover's brigade to be added to General Patterson's in reinforcement of your army, and they will march, immediately, down the east side of Hudson's river to Peeks-kill. Colonel Hamilton, to whom I beg leave to refer your excellency, will report every thing that I wish to have you acquainted with, as well with respect to the present state, as the future operations this way.

"I am, Sir, with due regard,
"Your excellency's very humble servant,
"HORATIO GATES.

"*His Excellency Gen. Washington.*"

Conversation between General Gates and Wilkinson.

The evening of my arrival at Albany, after the ordinary information and inquiries incident to my journey, General Gates observed, "I have had a spy in my camp since you left me." I did not comprehend the allusion, and he explained by informing me, "Colonel Hamilton

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had been sent up to him by General Washington; and would you believe it, he purloined the copy of a letter out of that closet," pointing to one in the room. I answered him, that "I conceived it impossible." He insisted on the fact, and further explained:—"The family being called out by business, he (Colonel Hamilton) was left alone an hour in this room, during which time, he took Conway's letter out of that closet, and copied it, and the copy has been furnished to Washington." I was shocked at the suspicion, continued to express my disbelief of it, and observed, "that I knew Colonel Troup had great confidence in Colonel Hamilton, and that I thought it more probable, he had innocently communicated the import of General Conway's letter to Colonel H." The General would not admit this palliation, but persisted that Hamilton had perpetrated the deed, and declared that "he had adopted a plan, which would *compel* General Washington to give him up, and that the receiver and the thief would be alike disgraced." I call the Searcher of all Hearts to witness the substantial truth of this statement, which, it will be hereafter seen, is supported by the course pursued by General Gates, and the tenor of his letter to General Washington, in which he requires the author of the information. Conscious as I was, that I had never spoken of that letter with evil intentions, or at all, except when it was mentioned to me; and considering it, as it really was, nothing more that the vehicle of the opinions of an individual, which he had expressed without reserve, and which General Gates himself had not treated confidentially, because he had read it *publicly* in my presence, as matter of information from the grand army; I felt no personal solicitude about it, nor could I ascribe to it the importance which was subsequently given to it; and therefore I did not dream of the foul imputations it was destined to draw down upon me, and the strife and trouble it would occasion me.

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The following letters may, from their immediate relation to these transactions, be properly introduced in this place: that from General Mifflin to General Gates, ju-

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tifies the opinion of General Conway, and bears testimony to his avowal of the sentiments contained in his letter to General Gates; and the letter of General Gates to General Conway, manifests his high approbation of the ideas and observations conveyed in the letter in question, before he knew it had been exposed, and of his perturbation afterwards.

"*Reading, November 28th,* 1777.

"My dear General,

"*An extract from General Conway's letter to you has been procured, and sent to head quarters. The extract was a collection of just sentiments;* yet such as should not have been intrusted to any of your family. General Washington inclosed it to General Conway without remarks. *It was supported, and the freedom of the sentiment was not apologised for:* on the contrary, although *some reflections were made on some people,* yet the practice was plead boldly, and no satisfaction given.

"My dear General, take care of your *generosity and frank disposition;* they cannot injure yourself, but may injure some of your best friends.

"Affectionately yours,

"T. M.

"*To Major-general Gates.*"

"*Albany, December* 3*d,* 1777.

"Dear General,

"Your *excellent letter* has given me pain; for at the same time that I am indebted to you for a just *idea of the cause of our misfortunes,* your *judicious observations* make me sensible of the difficulty there is *in remedying the evils which retard our success.* The perfect establishment of military discipline, consistent with the honour and principles which ought to be cherished amongst a free people, is not only the work of genius, but time.

"But, dear General, you have sent your resignation; and I assure you, I fondly hope it will not be accepted—it ought not.

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"The antipathy which has long subsisted between the French and English nations, will continue until they cease to be neighbours.—Such is the unhappy lot of mankind. The separation occasioned by the declaration of independence, has removed the cause of that hatred which the political connexion of the British colonists has implanted in their breasts against the French, and those who were attached to their interest. Now that Machiavelism can be no longer tempted to keep up those prejudices in the minds of the unthinking amongst us, the French and the people of the United States will become friends; and I am amazed that men in the station you mention, should have been so impolitic, or have possessed so little of the philosophic spirit, as to provoke a gentleman of your acknowledged merits, by illiberal reflections; however, I must declare to you, that I firmly believe there would be more greatness in continuing to serve the states, notwithstanding the provocation you think you have received from one of their *principal members*, than in resigning the commission you hold. Capricious or disgraced warriors so often leave the army, that I do not wish to see the name of Conway on the list of officers who have withdrawn from the service of our republic. I hope the result of your considerations on this subject, will retain in our service an excellent officer, who has already exposed his life in our defence; and that you will believe I am with the purest esteem,

"Dear General,

"Your most humble and most obedient serv't.

"HORATIO GATES.

"*P. S.* This moment I received a letter from our worthy friend General Mifflin, who informs me, that extracts from your letters to me, had been conveyed to General Washington, and that it occasioned an eclaircissement, *in which you acted with all the dignity of a virtuous soldier.* I intreat you, dear General, to let me know *which of the letters was* COPIED OFF. It is of the greatest importance, that I should detect the person who has been guilty

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of that act of infidelity: I cannot trace him out, unless I have your assistance.

"H. G.

"*General Conway.*"

A few days after my return to Albany, Major Ackland with whose family I was on an intimate footing, spoke to me with some solicitude on the subject of the retaliation threatened by Congress, for the ill treatment of Colonel Ethan Allen; he had made arrangements for Lady Harriet's *accouchement* in that place, but became uneasy lest the threat should be carried into effect, and he be selected as the object. He asked my opinion as a friend, whether it would be most advisable to remain where he was, or to obtain leave to remove on his parole to New York. I did not hesitate to recommend the latter, because by being near the commander of his army, he might be able to accelerate his exchange, and by being out of sight, should retaliation take place, he might be overlooked. He then inquired how he could effect this purpose; and I offered him my assistance, on condition he would make me a pledge: he promised every thing in his power, and I advised him to propose to General Gates, that if he would parole him, he should exert his utmost influence to procure Colonel Allen's exchange; and that, in case he did not succeed, then he would use his exertions to procure the exchange of my fellow statesman and friend, Major Otho Williams, with whom I had served at Cambridge, when he was a subaltern in the rifle company of Captain Price, and who was suffering severely in captivity at the time, having been wounded and made prisoner at Fort Washington in 1776. Major Ackland entered into this stipulation, and gave me his honour for the performance. His application to General Gates succeeded, and he removed with his precious charge to New York. I wrote Major Williams by him, and on his arrival there, finding the Major was confined on Long Island, Major Ackland procured permission for him to visit the city, and accompanied it with an invitation to

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his house, introduced him to Lady Harriet, distinguished him by the most generous and friendly attentions, and finally procured his exchange, not being able to succeed in that of Colonel Allen. Ackland took great interest in listening to Major Williams's recital of his sufferings, and those of the American prisoners, which frequently brought tears from Lady Harriet. Major Ackland's connexions, fortune, and parliamentary standing, being a member of the House of Commons, licensed him in the free expression of his sentiments; and one day on 'Change, when the treatment of the American prisoners became a topic of conversation, after expressing his abhorrence, he observed, "*But, gentlemen, inhumanity originates at head quarters, and you all follow the fashion.*" On another occasion, after dining with Lady Harriet, he proposed to Major Williams a visit to an assembly; they entered, and the attention of the belles and beaux could not but be attracted by two such elegant figures as Ackland and Williams; but the rancour of civil animosity prevailed over the obligations of good breeding, and Williams was shunned like a pestilence. Ackland made his introduction general, but without effect; and after sauntering across the room several times, "Come, Williams," said he, "this society is too illiberal for you and me; let us go home, and sup with Lady Harriet."

But unfortunate was the destiny of this gallant, generous, high minded gentleman; and it cannot be listened to by an American without deep regret, when it is known he gave his life in defence of their honour. I have the following detail from an English gentleman in whom I place confidence:—Ackland, after his return to England, procured a regiment, and at a dinner of military men, where the courage of the Americans was made a question, took the negative side with his usual decision; he was opposed, warmth ensued, and he gave the lie direct to a Lieutenant Lloyd, fought him, and was shot through the head. Lady Harriet lost her senses, and continued deranged two years; after which, I have been informed,

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she married Mr. Brudenell, who accompanied her from General Burgoyne's camp, when she sought her wounded husband on the Hudson's river.

General Gates appointed president of the board of Congress.

The Congress had new modelled the board of war, and on the 27th of November, appointed General Gates to preside* at it; in consequence of which, he repaired to the seat of the Congress, at York-town in Pennsylvania, and entered on the functions of the office. But before he left Albany, he gave me instructions to visit, inspect, and muster the garrison of Fort Schuyler. Not long after General Gates's departure, a report reached me, that Congress had prohibited the embarkation of the troops included in General Burgoyne's convention. Although an humble agent in that transaction, I felt myself deeply interested in the fulfilment of the contract, and could but

"*York-town, November 28th*, 1777.

"Sir,

"My last trouble was dated 23d instant, and conveyed by favour Mr. Pierce. By the present please to be informed, that Congress lately entered into resolutions for establishing a board of war, to consist of five commissioners, not members of the house; and I have received express orders to notify to you, Sir, you have been elected a commissioner, and by the unanimous voice of Congress, appointed president of the board; a circumstance strongly expressive of the high sense which Congress entertains of your abilities, and peculiar fitness to discharge the duties of that important office, upon the right execution of which the safety and interest of the United States eminently depend. I am further to acquaint you, it is the determination of Congress, not doubting of your concurrence, to continue your rank in the army, and not to confine you to the board when your presence and command in the field shall be judged more essential; and it is likewise given me in charge, to intimate that your attendance upon Congress in order to enter upon business at the board of war, as early as you can with convenience, is earnestly desired.

"Permit me Sir the honour of wishing you a good journey, and of repeating that I am,

"With very great respect and esteem,

"Your most obedient and humble servant,

"HENRY LAURENS, *Pres't. of Congress.*

"*The Hon. Major-general Gates.*"

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consider the motive which governed the Congress "*a ground of fear*," unworthy the representatives of a free people; and I would have fought over the campaign again, sooner than suffer the national honour to be tarnished. In this state of mind, I addressed the following letter to General Gates, whose honour I considered solemnly pledged for the fulfilment of the convention, under which the British army, trusting to the public faith, had surrendered their arms.

"*Albany, January 15th*, 1777.

"My dear Sir,

"It is reported here, that Congress have prohibited General Burgoyne's embarkation until the convention is ratified by his sovereign. I am equally hurt and alarmed by this information, for I consider their detention inadmissible in the spirit of the treaty. I fear a timorous circumspection has sullied our reputation, and injured our cause. The alternative, on General Burgoyne's embarkation, must have been his landing in Great Britain, or violating the treaty. The consequences in either case would have been more important to us, than any thing which can *now* happen. His arrival in Britain would have more effectually stirred up commotions and manifested our prowess, than all the exaggerated paper representations which have been or can be exhibited; and I believe it will be every where acknowledged, that so palpable a breach of the public faith, *that basis of national tranquillity*, as a violation of a convention, would have drawn upon the nation the just odium of all Europe, and have multiplied our advocates proportionably. The most celebrated writers on the laws of nature and of nations, hold that "in all contests disputed by arms, whether seditions, insurrections, or rebellions, the public faith and the forms of war are to be held inviolable, else how can an accommodation ever take place, without the

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total extinction of one party."* They further say, that when an army is invested, and all communication with its sovereign cut off, that very circumstance confers on the commander the authority of the state, and whatever he conforms to, agreeable to the duties committed to his care, is promised in the name and by the authority of his sovereign, who is as fully obliged to perform it, as if he had promised it in his own person; and that every commander of an army has a power of agreeing to the conditions on which the enemy admits his surrender; the engagements entered into by him to save his life or his liberty, with that of his men, are valid, as made within the limits of his powers, and his sovereign cannot annul them. These conventions have their limits, which consist in not prejudicing the rights of the sovereign over his subjects:—thus an enemy may require from prisoners, in consideration of their release, that they shall not carry arms against him during the war, having a right to keep them prisoners till then. I conceive the ties by which the conventionists were bound are dissolved, and should the king of Great Britain ratify the convention, which is both his interest and duty, I feel they cannot by any subsequent act be restrained from bearing arms; and I make no doubt of their acting against us next campaign. I set out this day for Fort Stanwix, and hope on my return to hear from you. The artillery and stores have been in motion for their destination some time. Numbers have deserted from the garrison since your departure: a want of clothing is the ostensible cause of this conduct. The commander wants stimulants, for I assure you the reins of government are so relaxed, as to induce a—no sort of discipline. As this department is in a feeble, shattered condition, I think it indispensable that the person who commands next season, should be acquainted with the resources and the geography of the country, before the campaign opens—hence the necessity of his early ap-

* Vattel, c. xii. § 162, 163, 164.

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pointment. In the confidence of friendship, I have offered you my sentiments with freedom, which I always and ever shall observe until prohibited.

"I am your obliged friend and ready serv't:

"JA. WILKINSON.

"Major-general Gates."

Sets out for Fort Schuyler.

I set out for Fort Schuyler a few hours after writing this letter, accompanied by my respected friend and contemporary Doctor Tillotson of Rhinebeck. The sleighing was excellent, and we made an interesting, though cold journey. We visited Johnson Hall, the mansion of its celebrated founder Sir William, the Mohawk Castle, the humble dwelling of General Herkimer, the Oriska Village 13 miles from Fort Schuyler, and passed over Herkimer's field of battle. We reposed a day or two at the fort, and while the rolls of muster and inspection, were under preparation, we visited the Oneida Castle, where I first witnessed the village and war dances of the Aborigines. We spent a night with these well bred Indians, lodging in the house of the worthy and respectable missionary, the Rev. Mr. Kirkland, and taking leave of them, the next morning returned to Fort Schuyler; and having mustered and inspected the troops, we turned about for Albany.

Visits the Oriska village.

Returns to Albany.

Improvement in the western parts of New York.

At that period, and it is only thirty-eight years since, the most western settlements of the state of New York, were limited to the German flats, from whence we now behold them pushed forward hundreds of miles to the great lakes, and the St. Lawrence; impervious forests the abode of wild beasts, being transformed into fields and meadows; and the haunts of savages, occupied by the neat cottage or splendid edifice, by towns, villages and manufactories of almost every species. Happy people! shew yourselves worthy of these divine benedictions, by inculcating moral precepts and religious duties into the heads and hearts of the rising generation; shew yourselves worthy of the political blessings, derived from the toil and the blood of your ancestors; by reforming the

Appeal to the inhabitants.

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conduct of your public agents, and bringing them back to a sense of their duty, as servants employed and paid by you, to consult the interests of the community, and not to promote their own selfish projects; and resolve to perpetuate the republic by correcting the misapplication of your money; dissipated on foreign missions; on multiplied offices and officers; on increased salaries and in numberless devices, artfully contrived to extend the patronage, and increase the influence of the executive; which, if not seasonably checked, will swallow up the co-ordinate branches of the constitution, and convert the government of the people, to the use of the elect, as has happened in all other countries.

On my return to Albany, I found a letter from the President of Congress, advising me that I had been appointed* secretary to the board of war and ordnance by that honourable body, which I answered on the 3d of February, and the next day I received a most extraordinary letter from Lord Sterling, to which I made an immediate answer; the publication of these letters I deem essential to the vindication of my character, against *the first* assassin's blow, which was aimed at it.

"*Valley Forge Camp, Jan. 6th,* 1778.

"Dear Sir,

Letters from and to Lord Sterling.

"When I had the pleasure of seeing you at Reading *it was mentioned,* that in a letter from General Conway to General Gates the following words, viz. Heaven surely is determined to save the American cause, or a weak General and bad councils had long since lost it, *or words to that effect.* It was afterwards, it seems, *frequently mentioned in camp,* and Conway charged with having wrote them. After you had lately been in camp, he says, that he inquired of you whether you had seen the letter he wrote to General Gates, that you said you had, and that you had declared in the presence of several, that there was no such words or any words to that effect in the let-

* See Journals of Congress, Jan. 6, 1778.

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ter. I well know that it is impossible you could have made any such declaration, but it will give great satisfaction to many of you friends to know whether Conway made such inquiry, and what was your answer; they would also be glad to know, *what are the words of the letter, and I should be very much obliged to you for a copy of that part of it.*

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your most obedient,

"And humble servant,

"STERLING.

"*Brigadier-general Wilkinson.*"

"*Albany, Feb. 4th*, 1778.

"My Lord,

"Your letter of the 6th January I have just received, and seat myself to answer the particulars.

"I perfectly remember spending a social day with your Lordship at Reading (in family), in the course of which the conversation became general, unreserved and copious, the tenor of your Lordship's discourse and the nature of our situation made it confidential. I cannot therefore recapitulate particulars, or charge my memory with the circumstance you mention; but, my Lord, I disdain low craft, subtlety, or evasion, and will acknowledge it is possible in the warmth of social intercourse, when the mind is relaxed and the heart is unguarded, that observations may have elapsed which have not since occurred to me. On my late arrival in camp Brigadier-general Conway informed me that he had been charged by General Washington, with writing a letter to Major-general Gates which reflected on the General and the army. The particulars of this charge, which Brigadier-general Conway then repeated, I cannot now recollect, I had read the letter alluded to, I did not consider the information conveyed in his excellency's letter, as expressed by Brigadier-general Conway, to be literal, and well remember replying to that effect in dubious terms; I had no inducement to stain my veracity, were I ever so prone

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to that infamous vice, as Brigadier-general Conway informed me he had justified the charge.

"I can scarce credit my senses, when I read the paragraph in which you request an extract from a private letter, which had fallen under my observation. *I may have been indiscreet, my Lord, but be assured I am not dishonourable.*

"I am, my Lord,

"Your obedient humble servant,

"JAMES WILKINSON.

"*To Major-general Lord Sterling.*"

This communication of Lord Sterling, as well as memory serves me, was the first intimation I had received, of my being implicated in the disclosure of Conway's letter to General Washington; it filled me with pain and indignation, and my answer to his Lordship's, was written in concert with a friend and contemporary, James Cragie esq. then apothecary-general to the northern department, and since a resident of Cambridge near Boston, and was carefully deposited in the post office. Although unconscious of having spoken to Lord Sterling of Conway's letter, I knew it was possible, because I had seen that letter, and had heard it spoken of, in company at Easton, as a matter of notoriety; and therefore I frankly acknowledged the possibility of a circumstance, which I could neither recollect, nor admit; it was due to candour, and I paid the debt, little suspecting the extent of Lord Sterling's dishonourable conduct at the time.

Leaves Albany and proceeds to Reading and Lancaster. Ascertains that General Gates had denounced him.

I left Albany the 12th or 15th February, and with led horses travelled as far as Reading in a sleigh, where I mounted and reached Lancaster the 21st. On my arrival at that place, certain reports, which I had heard indistinctly in Reading, were confirmed by several officers of my acquaintance, that General Gates had denounced me, as the betrayer of Conway's letter, and spoke of me in the grossest language.

I was shocked by this information; I had sacrificed my lineal rank at General Gates's request, I had served him

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with zeal and fidelity, of which he possessed the strongest evidence, and was ready to have laid down my life for him; yet he had condemned me unheard for an act of which I was perfectly innocent, and against which every feeling of my soul revolted with horror. The distance between us was immense; he, an old major-general, who had borne a commission in Braddock's defeat, the conqueror of a whole British army, composed of chosen troops, and commanded by a distinguished general, had been recently selected for the head of the war department, by the unanimous vote of Congress; and was supported by a powerful faction in that body, even against the commander in chief; I, a boy of twenty, without experience, without patronage, without political friends of congressional influence, whose character remained to be established; the odds was indeed great; yet, although my feelings and affections were outraged, my resolution was not appalled, I remembered the injunctions of a dying father, I worshipped honour as the jewel of my soul, and did not pause for the course to be pursued; but I owed it to disparity of years and rank, to former connexion, and the affections of my own breast, to drain the cup of conciliation, and seek an explanation, which I believed the exposition of my correspondence with Lord Sterling would produce, as it ought to have done; because it acquitted me of sinister intention, and stamped the report of his Lordship to General Washington, with palpable falsehood. I halted on the 22d, and transmitted to General Gates the following letter by my servant, to which I received the cruel and insulting answer which is annexed.

Correspondence with Lord Sterling alluded to.

"*Lancaster, Feb. 22d*, 1778.

"Sir,

"When you reflect on the length and zeal of my attachment to your interest, when you candidly weigh my steady determined exertions for your emolument, and coolly consider the character I have ever sustained, you must be

Note to General Gates, and answer.

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sorry for the abuse you have offered my reputation. What motive, Sir, could induce me, to injure you or your correspondent. He, a stranger of whom I entertained favourable sentiments—you, my boasted patron, friend and benefactor, whose cause I have uniformly asserted and firmly maintained; but, Sir, in spite of every consideration, you have wounded my honour, and must make acknowledgments or satisfaction for the injury.

"In consideration of our past connexion, I descend to that explanation with you, which I should have denied any other man. The inclosed letters unmask the villain and evince my innocence. My Lord shall bleed for his conduct, but it is proper I first see you.

"I am, with respect,

"Your most humble servant,

"JAMES WILKINSON.

"*Major-general Gates.*"

"*York-town, 23d Feb.* 1778.

"Sir,

"The following extract of a letter from General Washington to me will shew how your honour has been called in question, which is all the explanation necessary upon that matter, any other satisfaction you may command.

"'I am to inform you then that Colonel Wilkinson in his way to Congress, in the month of October last, fell in with Lord Sterling at Reading, and not in confidence that I ever understood, informed his aid-de-camp, Major M'Williams that General Conway had written thus to you, "Heaven has been determined to save your country, or a weak General and bad counsellors would have ruined it." Lord Sterling from motives of friendship transmitted the account with this remark, "the inclosed was communicated by Colonel Wilkinson to Major M'Williams," such duplicity of conduct, I shall always think it my duty to detect.'

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"After reading the whole of the above extract, I am astonished if you really gave Major M'Williams such information how you could *intimate* to me, that it was *possible* Colonel Troup *had conversed* with Colonel Hamilton upon the subject of General Conway's letter.

"I am, Sir,

"Your humble servant,

"HORATIO GATES.

"*Brigadier-general Wilkinson.*"

Wilkinson requests Captain Stoddert to carry a message to General Gates, which he refuses.

I immediately proceeded to York-town, where I purposely arrived in the twilight, to escape observation; there I found my early companion and friend Captain Stoddert,* recounted my wrongs to him, and requested him to bear a message to General Gates, whose *manly* proffer of any *satisfaction I might require*, removed the difficulties which might otherwise have attended the application; he peremptorily refused me, remonstrated against my intention, and assured me I was running headlong to destruction; but ruin had no terrors for an ardent young man, who prized his honour a thousand fold more than his life, and who was willing to hazard his eternal happiness in its defence. Pardon me high Heaven! in pity to the frailties of my nature. Pardon me divine Author of my being! for yielding to the tyranny of fashion, the despotic prescriptions of honour, when I sought, by illicit means, to vindicate the dignity of the creature, whom thou hast formed after thine own likeness; for the first time in our lives we parted in displeasure, and I accidentally met with Lieutenant-colonel Burgess Ball of the Virginia line, whose spirit was as independent as his fortune, and he willingly became my friend; by him I addressed the following note to General Gates, which I find without date, though it was delivered the same evening, (the 23d).

Prevails on Colonel Ball to bear a messsage to General Gates.

* Since Secretary of the Navy.

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"Sir,

"I have discharged my duty to you and to my conscience; meet me to-morrow morning behind the English church, and I will there stipulate the satisfaction which you have promised to grant.

"I am,

"Your most humble servant,

"JAMES WILKINSON.

"*General Gates.*"

The general expression of this billet, was calculated to prevent unfair advantages, for, although General Gates had promised me satisfaction, I determined to avoid unnecessary exposition; and therefore Colonel Ball was instructed to adjust time, and circumstances; the General received him with complaisance, and made no difficulty about arrangements, we were to meet at 8 o'clock with pistols and without distance. We arose early the next morning, had put our arms in order, and was just about to repair to the ground, when Captain Stoddert called on me, and informed me General Gates desired to speak with me. I expressed my astonishment, and observed it was "impossible!" He replied, with much agitation, "for God's sake be not always a fool, come along and see him." Struck with the manner of my friend, I inquired where the General was? He answered, "in the street near the door." The surprise robbed me of circumspection, I requested Colonel Ball to halt, and followed Captain Stoddert; I found General Gates unarmed and alone, and was received with tenderness, but manifest embarrassment; he asked me to walk, turned into a back street and we proceeded in silence till we passed the buildings, when he burst into tears, took me by the hand, and asked me, "how I could think he wished to injure me?" I was too deeply affected to speak, and he relieved my embarrassment by continuing, "*I* injure you, it is impossible, I should as soon think of injuring my own child." This language

Gates's reception of that gentleman.

Captain Stoddert arrives from General Gates, requesting an interview.

General Gates's explanation.

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not only disarmed me but awakened all my confidence, and all my tenderness; I was silent, and he added, "besides there was no cause for injuring you, as Conway acknowledged his letter, and has since said much harder things to Washington's face." Such language left me nothing to require, it was satisfactory beyond expectation, and rendered me more than content, I was flattered and pleased, and if a third person, had doubted the sincerity of the explanation, I would have insulted him; a long conversation ensued, in which Lord Sterling's conduct was canvassed, and my purpose respecting him made known, and it was settled I should attend at the war office, in my capacity of secretary a few days, and then have leave to visit the camp at Valley Forge, where Lord Sterling was quartered.

It is settled that Wilkinson should attend the war office and have leave of absence.

I attended at the war office, and I think found there, the honourable Judge Peters and Colonel T. Pickering, but my reception from the President, General Gates, did not correspond with his recent professions, he was civil, but barely so, and I was at a loss to account for his coldness, yet had no suspicion of his insincerity. After the lapse of a few days, I set out for the Valley Forge, and at Lancaster fell in with Doctor Craik, the associate of Colonel Washington in the war of 1756, and now the most confidential friend of the commander in chief. I had been intimate with him several years, and we communicated freely on army affairs; I learned from him, that the brigadiers of the army had remonstrated to Congress, against the promotion of General Conway, and that forty-seven colonels had done the same thing with respect to myself, among whom I discovered a number who had, on my visit to the camp at White Marsh in November congratulated me on my promotion. Conway's appointment to the inspectorship of the army, with the rank of major-general, after he had insulted the commander in chief, was a splenetic measure of a majority of Congress, as factious as it was ill judged; and I was comprehended ostensibly on the ground of principle, but

Coolness of General Gates.

Wilkinson proceeds for Valley Forge.

Remonstrance of the brigadiers and colonels against Conway's and Wilkinson's promotion.

Reflections thereon.

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in fact, because I had been promoted on General Gates's recommendation, and was considered his partisan;* such are the baneful effects of party intrigues, which embrace suspicions for facts, and, without discrimination, involve in its horrible vortex, the good and the bad, the innocent and the guilty. On receiving this information, I did not hesitate a moment, but tendered my resignation to the President of Congress, on the same principle, that I had a year before resigned my lieutenant-colonelcy to General Washington; and as a testimony of their sense of my patriotism, the Congress entered my letter on the journals.

In Congress.—Friday, March 6th, 1778.

Minutes of Congress recording Wilkinson's resignation.

"The following letter of the 3d, from James Wilkinson, was read.

"Sir,

"I am informed the mark of distinction conferred on me has occasioned a dissatisfaction in the army, and to obviate any embarrassment which may result from this disposition, by the consequent resignation of officers of merit, I beg leave to relinquish my brevet of brigadier, wishing to hold no commission unless I can wear it to the honour and advantage of my country, and this conduct however repugnant to fashionable ambition, I find

* *Extract of a letter from Col. Walter Stewart to Major-general Gates, dated, Camp, Feb. 4th, 1778.*

"General Wayne yesterday informed me, of some very improper steps my old friend Wilkinson had made use of, respecting a letter to you by Gen. Conway, which has really given me very great uneasiness. I ever was sensible of Wilky's volatility and open heartedness, and fear he might, in an unguarded moment, mention something of the affair to a person he looked upon to be his friend; but depend upon it, my dear Sir, his heart is truly good and so far from injuring you, (if in his power) or betraying any confidence you might place in him, he looks upon you as his patron, and is truly sensible of the many and great obligations he is under to you; but as I hope to see you in a short time, I shall say nothing further on this subject at present."

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consistent with those principles on which I early drew my sword in the present contest.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your obedient humble servant,

"JAMES WILKINSON.

"*The Hon. Henry Laurens esq.*
President of Congress."

Wilkinson calls on Colonel Moylan to deliver a message to Lord Sterling.

I met in Lancaster the honoured object of my tenderest attachment, in whose society a fortnight flitted away like a vision of the morn, and I did not reach the Valley Forge before the 16th or 17th of the month. I took quarters with my friends Colonel Moylan, Colonel C. Biddle, Doctor Shippen, and other officers, at Moore Hall, and requested the former to deliver a peremptory message to Lord Sterling, on the ground of his having misrepresented my conduct to the prejudice of my honour. This proposition was disapproved as being too precipitate, because a suitable acknowledgment from his Lordship, would be a more satisfactory reparation of the wrong, than taking his life or losing my own; and because, in case his Lordship refused to conform to my demand, then I should be justified in appealing to the last resort. There was not in the whole range of my friends and acquaintances, and I might add in the universe, a man of more sublimated sentiment, or who combined with sound discretion a more punctilious sense of honour, than Colonel Moylan: I therefore could not resist the force of his observations, and consented to send his Lordship the following note, to which he immediately replied.

Colonel Moylan proposes another mode, which is adopted.

"*Moore Hall, March 18th,* 1778.

"My Lord,

Correspondence between Wilkinson and Lord Sterling.

"The propriety or impropriety of your communicating to his excellency any circumstance which passed at your Lordship's board at Reading, I leave to be determined by your own feelings, and the judgment of the public; but as the affair has eventually induced reflections on my in-

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tegrity, the sacred duty I owe my honour obliges me to require from your Lordship's hand, that the conversation which you have published, *passed in a private company, during a convivial hour.* Colonel Moylan who delivers this is my friend, and will receive your reply.

"I have the honour to be,

"Your Lordship's obedient servant,

"JA. WILKINSON.

"*The Hon. Major-general Lord Sterling—Camp.*"

"*March 18th*, 1778.

"Dear Sir,

"As to the propriety of my communicating to his excellency General Washington a circumstance which happened in conversation at Reading, I have not the least doubt of; nor can I conceive that your having mentioned that very extraordinary paragraph will ever injure your honour.

"However that may be, I shall ever be ready to aver the truth, and equally ready to give you the satisfaction of having it under my hand, that the words which I did communicate to his excellency "*passed in a private company, during a convivial hour,*" but under no injunction of secrecy. As to my having published this conversation, I do not know that I ever mentioned it since till lately, when a certain gentleman asserted in company, that you had denied that you had ever had any such conversation. This put me under the necessity of asserting the contrary; and of this I immediately wrote you, being sure you never would deny it; by your silence on that head since, I must conclude you never received my letter.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"STERLING.

"*James Wilkinson, Esq.*"

It is possible Lord Sterling might not have received my letter of the 4th of February; but it seems im-

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probable, since it was written with the privity of Doctor Craigie, and carefully deposited in the post office with my own hands. A contrast of the acknowledgment contained in this letter of his Lordship with his information* to General Washington from Reading, will establish my innocence and the extent of my wrongs, and will stamp the proper value on the candour of his Lordship; and the following letter will manifest the interest General Washington took in the affair.

"*Valley Forge, March* 21*st*, 1778.

"My Lord,

"In answer to your favour of this date, give me leave to say, that I am well pleased with the termination of your correspondence with Colonel Wilkinson. I sent for that gentleman, after the conversation had with your Lordship, and shewed him the letters which Mr. Harrison furnished you with a sight of; he seemed a good deal surprised at G——'s letters, and was not at all sparing in his abuse of him and Conway.

"The arrangement of the two regiments as inclosed by you, will be perfectly agreeable to me, and must I fancy be so to the * * *, unless it should interfere with any general plan they may have in view for the reduction of the sixteen additional battalions.

"The sooner you can furnish the characters of the four Pennsylvania regiments in your division the better, as Generals Reed and Wayne are I believe upon that business with the whole Pennsylvania line.

"Colonel Burr must wait till more field officers return to camp before he leaves it. The daily application for discharges and furloughs distresses me beyond mea-

* See General Gat[illegible]'s letter to General Wilkinson, Feb. 23d, 1778; page 386, ante.

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sure. I am sorry to hear of your indisposition, but hope it will soon go off.

"I am your Lordship's most ob't humble serv't,
"GO. WASHINGTON.

"*P. S.* Upon re-examining the arrangement inclosed, I find first and second lieutenants, which are not to be in the new establishment. I also perceive that all the officers, nearly, are taken from Malcolm's regiment. Is this agreeable to Spencer?

"*Major-general Lord Sterling.*"

Wilkinson is invited to dine with General Washington.

A day or two after my arrival at camp, I was invited to dine at head quarters, and made an apology; the next day Colonel T. Tilghman, an aid-de-camp to the commander in chief, with whom I had been long acquainted, called on me, repeated the invitation, and observed, the General wanted to see me. I informed Colonel T. of the delicacy of my situation; "that reports had gone forth, charging me with betraying private confidence to curry favour with the General, and that under such circumstances, I was persuaded he would excuse the point of duty, and pardon me for avaoiding whatever might countenance the calumny." The morning after, Colonel Tilghman again called on me, and informed me from the General, that it was concerning the circumstance to which I had alluded he desired to see me, and I thereupon engaged to dine with him.

Interview and conversation with General Washington.

I went early agreeably to request, was kindly received, and after a few minutes the General invited me into his cabinet, and opened the subject of General Conway's letter. A conversation ensued, in which I took occasion to remark on the cruel misrepresentations of Lord Sterling, disclaiming any correspondence or even acquaintance with M'Williams, and utterly denied the information he had received from his Lordship. The General spoke freely of the cabal which had been formed against him, and mentioned the persons whom he suspected to be

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at the bottom of it; he expressed himself entirely satisfied with my conduct, but observed, that it might be material to me, to know what had passed between General Gates and himself, respecting Conway's letter, and that he had desired to see me particularly on that subject; that I had been charged with a serious offence, but that the motives and the grounds were too plain, to make any impression on his mind injurious to me: he then called for the correspondence with General Gates, and laid before me the following letters.

"*Albany December 8th*, 1777.

"Sir,

"I shall not attempt to describe what as a private gentleman I cannot help feeling, on representing to my mind the disagreeable situation in which confidential letters, when exposed to public inspection, may place an unsuspecting correspondent; but as a public officer, I conjure your excellency, to give me all the assistance you can, in tracing out the author of the infidelity which put extracts from General Conway's letters to me into your hands. Those letters have been *stealingly copied*—but which of them, when, and by whom, is to me as yet an unfathomable secret. There is not one officer in my suite, nor amongst those who have free access to me, upon whom I could with the least justification to myself, fix the suspicion; and yet my uneasiness may deprive me of the usefulness of the worthiest men. It is *I believe in your excellency's power* to do me and the United States a very important service, by detecting a wretch who may betray me, and capitally injure the *very operations under your immediate directions.** For this reason, Sir, I beg your excellency will favour me with the proof you can procure to that effect. But the crime being eventually so important, that the least loss of time may be attended with the worst consequences; and it being unknown to me, whether the letter came to you from a member of Congress or *from an officer*, I shall have the honour of

* Evidently alluding to Colonel Hamilton.

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transmitting a copy of this to the President, that the Congress may, in concert with your excellency, obtain as soon as possible a discovery, which so deeply affects the safety of the states. Crimes of that magnitude ought not to remain unpunished.

"I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect,
"Your excellency's most humble
"and most obedient servant,
"HORATIO GATES.

"*His Excellency Gen. Washington.*"

"*Valley Forge, Jan. 4th, 1777.*

"Sir,

"Your letter of the 8th ultimo, came to my hands a few days ago, and to my great surprise informed me, that a copy of it had been sent to Congress; for what reason I find myself unable to account; but as some end doubtless was intended to be answered by it, I am laid under the disagreeable necessity of returning my answer through the same channel, lest any member of that honourable body should harbour an unfavourable suspicion of my having practised some indirect means, to come at the contents of the confidential letters between you and General Conway.

"I am to inform you then, that Colonel Wilkinson, in his way to Congress in the month of October last, fell in with Lord Sterling at Reading, and not in confidence that I ever understood, informed his aid-de-camp, Major M'Williams, that General Conway had written thus to you:—'Heaven has been determined to save your country, or a weak general and bad counsellors would have ruined it.' Lord Sterling, from motives of friendship, transmitted the account with this remark: 'The inclosed was communicated by Col. Wilkinson to Major M'Williams; such duplicity of conduct I shall always think it my duty to detect.'

"In consequence of this information, and without having any thing more in view than merely to shew that gen-

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tleman that I was not unapprised of his intriguing disposition, I wrote him a letter in these words:— CHAP IX.

"Sir.—A letter which I received last night contained the following paragraph: 'In a letter from General Conway to General Gates, he says—*Heaven has been determined to save your country, or a weak general and bad counsellors would have ruined it.*' I am, &c."

"Neither this letter, nor the information which occasioned it, was ever directly or indirectly communicated by me to a single officer in this army out of my own family, excepting the Marquis de la Fayette, who having been spoken to on the subject by General Conway, applied for and saw, under injunctions of secrecy, the letter which contained Colonel Wilkinson's information; so desirous was I of concealing every matter that could in its consequences give the smallest interruption to the tranquillity of this army, or afford a gleam of hope to the enemy by dissensions therein.

"Thus, Sir, with an openness and candour, which I hope will ever characterise and mark my conduct, have I complied with your request. *The only concern I feel upon the occasion, finding how matters stand is, that in doing this I have necessarily been obliged to name a gentleman whom I am persuaded, (although I never exchanged a word with him upon the subject,) thought he was rather doing an act of justice than committing an act of infidelity;* and sure I am, that till Lord Sterling's letter came to my hands, I never knew that General Conway (who I viewed in the light of a stranger to you) was a correspondent of yours; much less did I suspect, *that I was the subject of your confidential letters.*—Pardon me then for adding, *that so far from conceiving that the safety of the states can be affected, or in the smallest degree injured by a discovery of this kind* —or that I should be called upon in such solemn terms to point out the author—*that I considered the information as coming from yourself, and given with a friendly view to forewarn and consequently forearm me, against a secret*

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enemy, or in other words a dangerous incendiary—in which character, sooner or later, this country will know General Conway.—But in this, as in other matters of late, I have found myself mistaken.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"GO. WASHINGTON.

"*The Hon. Major-general Gates.*"

"*York-town, January 23d,* 1778.

"Sir,

"The letter of the 4th inst. which I had the honour to receive yesterday from your excellency, has relieved me from unspeakable uneasiness. I now anticipate the pleasure it will give you, when you discover that what has been conveyed to you for an extract of General Conway's letter to me, was not an information which friendly motives induced a man of honour to give, that injured virtue might be fore-armed against secret enemies. The paragraph which your excellency has condescended to transcribe, is spurious. It was certainly fabricated to answer the most selfish and wicked purposes.

"I cannot avoid sketching out to your excellency the history of General Conway's letter, from the time that it came to my hands by Lieutenant-colonel Troup, my aid-de-camp, to whom General Conway delivered it at Reading on the 11th of October, to this time, as far as it has affected me and the officers of my family.

"That letter contained very judicious remarks upon that want of discipline, which has often alarmed your Excellency, and I believe all observing patriots. The reasons which, in his judgment, deprived us of the success we would reasonably expect, were methodically explained by him; but neither the "weakness" of any of our generals, nor "bad counsellor," were mentioned; and consequently cannot be assigned or imagined as part of those reasons to which General Conway attributed some of our losses. He wrote to me as a candid observer, as other officers in every service write to each other, for

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obtaining better intelligence than that of newspapers, and that freedom renders such letters thus far confidential in some measure. The judgment of the person who received them, points out to him, according to time and circumstances, the propriety or impropriety attending their being communicated, when no particular injunction of secrecy was requested.

"Particular actions rather than persons were blamed, but with impartiality; and I am convinced that he did not aim at lessening in my opinion the merit of any person. His letter was perfectly harmless; however, now that various reports have been circulated concerning its contents, they ought not to be submitted to the solemn inspection of even those who stand most high in the public esteem. Anxiety and jealousy would arise in the breast of very respectable officers, who, rendered sensible of faults which inexperience, and that alone, may have led them into, would be unnecessarily disgusted, if they perceived a probability of such errrors being recorded. Honour forbids it, and patriotism demands that I should return the letter into the hands of the writer. I will do it; but at the same time I declare, that the paragraph conveyed to your excellency as a genuine part of it, was in words as well as in substance a wicked forgery.

"About the beginning of December I was informed that letter had occasioned an explanation between your Excellency and that gentleman. Not knowing whether the whole letter or part of it had been stealingly copied, but fearing malice had altered its original feature, I own Sir, that a dread of the mischiefs which might attend this forgery, I suspected would be made, put me for some time in a most painful situation.

"When I communicated to the officers in my family the intelligence I had received, they all intreated me to rescue their characters from the suspicions they justly conceived themselves liable to, until the guilty person should be known. To facilitate the discovery, I wrote your Excellency; but unable to learn whether General Conway's letter had been transmitted to you by a mem-

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ber of Congress or a gentleman in the army, I was afraid much time would be lost in the course of the inquiry, and that the states might receive some capital injury from the infidelity of *the person who I thought had stolen a copy of the obnoxious letter*,* was it not probable that the secrets of the army might be obtained and betrayed through the same means to the enemy?—For this reason, Sir, not doubting the Congress would most cheerfully concur with you in tracing out the criminal, I wrote to the President, and inclosed to him a copy of my letter to your excellency.

"About the time I was forwarding these letters, Brigadier-general Wilkinson returned to Albany. I informed him of the treachery which had been committed, but I concealed from him the measure I was pursuing to unmask the author. Wilkinson answered, he was assured it never would come to light, and endeavoured to fix my suspicions on Lieutenant-colonel Troup, who, said he, might have incautiously conversed on the substance of General Conway's letter with Colonel Hamilton, whom you had sent not long before to Albany. I did not listen to this insinuation against your aid-de-camp and mine. I considered it even as ungenerous. But the light your excellency has just assisted me with, exhibiting the many qualifications which are necessarily blended together in the head and heart of General Wilkinson, I would not omit this fact; it will enable your excellency to judge whether or not he would scruple to make such a forgery as that which he now stands charged with, and ought to be exemplarily punished. To attempt sowing dissensions amongst the principal officers of the army, and rendering them odious to each other, by false suggestions and forgeries, is in my opinion a crime of the first magnitude; it involves with it all the consequences of positive treason.

"That the forgery now in view was machinated for injuring General Conway, and perhaps myself, in your judgment, is now evident to me; and I trust the detection will operate as it ought to operate upon your excellency,

* Again alluding to Colonel Hamilton.

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as well as the members of the Congress, *before whom your letter necessitates me to lay this answer.* The station of the calumniator seems to justify your excellency for having believed, till now, that the extract was genuine; and yet, Sir, I cannot help wishing you had sent me a copy of it immediately after your explanation with General Conway.

"Would that your excellency's prediction relative to him, had not been inserted in your letter, which came to me unsealed through the hands of Congress.

"I sincerely wish the detection of this forgery may render us all more cautious, and that to procure a fair and dispassionate explanation, whenever insinuations are made to the prejudice of respected characters, may become an established rule in society as well as in public business, throughout the United States.

"I am with unfeigned respect, Sir,
"Your excellency's most humble,
"and most obedient servant,
"HORATIO GATES.

"*His Excellency Gen. Washington.*"

"*H. Q. Valley Forge, Feb. 9th,* 1778.

"Sir,

"I was duly favoured with your letter of the 23d of last month, to which I should have replied sooner, had I not been delayed by business that required my more immediate attention.

"It is my wish to give implicit credit to the assurances of every gentleman; but in the subject of our present correspondence, I am sorry to confess, there happens to be some unlucky circumstances, which involuntarily compel me to consider the discovery you mention, not so satisfactory and conclusive as you seem to think it.

"I am so unhappy as to find no small difficulty in reconciling the spirit and import of your different letters, and sometimes the different parts of the same letter with each other. It is not unreasonable to presume that your

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first information of my having notice of General Conway's letter, came from himself; there were very few in the secret, and it is natural to suppose that he being immediately concerned, would be the most interested to convey the intelligence to you; it is also far from improbable, that he acquainted you with the substance of the passage communicated to me: one would expect this, if he believed it to be spurious, in order to ascertain the imposition, and evince his innocence, especially as he seemed to be under some uncertainty, as to the precise contents of what he had written, when I signified my knowledge of the matter to him. If he neglected doing it, the omission cannot easily be interpreted into any thing else than a consciousness of the reality of the extract, if not literally at least substantially. If he did not neglect it, it must appear somewhat strange, that the forgery remained so long undetected, and that your first letter to me from Albany of the 8th of December, should tacitly recognise the genuineness of the paragraph in question, while your only concern, at that time, seemed to be the "tracing out the author of the infidelity which put extracts of General Conway's letters into my hands." Throughout the whole of that letter the reality of the extracts is by the fairest implication allowed, and your only solicitude was to find out the person who brought them to light. After making the most earnest pursuit of the author of the supposed treachery, without saying a word about the truth or falsehood of the passage, your letter of the 23d ultimo, to my great surprise, proclaims it "in words as well as in substance, a wicked forgery."

"It is not my intention to contradict this assertion, but only to intimate some considerations which tend to induce a supposition, that though none of General Conway's letters to you contain the offensive passage mentioned, there might have been something in them too nearly related to it, that could give such an extraordinary alarm. It may be said, if this were not the case, how easy in the first instance to have declared there was nothing exceptionable in them, and to have produced the letters themselves in

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support of it? This may be thought the most proper and effectual way of refuting misrepresentations and removing all suspicion. The propriety of the objections suggested against submitting them to inspection, may very well be questioned. The various reports circulated concerning their contents were, perhaps, so many arguments for making them speak for themselves, to place the matter upon the footing of certainty. Concealment in an affair which had made so much noise, though not by *my means*, will naturally lead men to conjecture the worst, and it will be a subject of speculation even to candour itself. The anxiety and jealousy you apprehend from revealing the letter, will be very apt to be increased by suppressing it.

"It may be asked, why not submit to inspection a performance perfectly harmless, and of course conceived in terms of proper caution and delicacy? Why suppose that "anxiety and jealousy would have arisen in the breasts of very respectable officers, or that they would have been unnecessarily disgusted at being made sensible of their faults, when related with judgment and impartiality by a candid observer?" Surely they could not have been unreasonable enough to take offence at a performance so perfectly inoffensive, "blaming actions rather than persons," which have evidently no connexion with one another, and indulgently "recording the errors of inexperience."

"You are pleased to consider General Conway's letters as of a confidential nature, observing that, "time and circumstances must point out the propriety or impropriety of communicating such letters." Permit me to inquire, whether, when there is an impropriety in communication, it is only applicable with respect to the parties, who are the subjects of them. One might be led to imagine this to be the case, from your having admitted others into the secret of your confidential correspondence, at the same time that you thought it ineligible, it should be trusted to those officers, whose actions underwent its scrutiny. Your not knowing whether the letter, under consideration, "came to me from a member of Congress,

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or from an officer," plainly indicates, that you had, originally, communicated it to at least one of that honourable body; and I learn from General Conway, that before his late arrival at York-town, it had been committed to the perusal of several of its members, and was afterwards shewn by himself to three more. It is somewhat difficult to conceive a reason founded in generosity, for imparting the free and confidential strictures of that ingenious censor, on the operations of the army under my command, to a member of Congress, but, perhaps, "time and circumstances pointed it out." It must indeed be acknowledged, that the faults of very respectable officers, not less injurious for being the result of inexperience, were not improper topics to engage the attention of members of Congress.

"It is, however, greatly to be lamented, that this adept in military science, did not employ his abilities in the progress of the campaign, in pointing out those wise measures, which were calculated to give us, "that degree of success we might reasonably expect." The United States have lost much, from that unseasonable diffidence, which prevented his embracing the numerous opportunities, he had in council, of displaying those rich treasures of knowledge and experience, he has since so freely laid open to you. I will not do him the injustice to impute the penurious reserve, which ever appeared in him upon such occasions, to any other cause than an excess of modesty, neither will I suppose, he possesses no other merit than of that after kind of sagacity, which qualifies a man better for profound discoveries of errors, that have been committed, and advantages that have been lost, than for the exercise of that foresight and provident discernment, which enable him to avoid the one and anticipate the other. But willing as I am to subscribe to all his pretensions, and to believe that his remarks on the operations of the campaign were very judicious, and that he has sagaciously discanted on many things, that might have been done, I cannot help being a little sceptical, as to his ability to have found out the means of accomplish-

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ing them, or to prove the sufficiency of those in our possession. These minutiæ I suspect he did not think worth his attention, particularly as they might not be within the compass of *his views*.

"Notwithstanding the hopeful presages, you are pleased to figure to yourself, of General Conway's firm and constant friendship to America, I cannot persuade myself, to retract the prediction concerning him, which you so emphatically wish had not been inserted in my last; a better acquaintance with him, than I have reason to think you have had, from what you say, and a concurrence of circumstances oblige me to give him but little credit for the qualities of his heart, of which, at least I beg leave to assume the privilege of being a tolerable judge. Were it necessary, more instances than one might be adduced from his behaviour and conversation, to manifest that he is capable of all the malignity of detraction, and all the meannesses of intrigue, to gratify the absurd resentment of disappointed vanity, or to answer the purposes of personal aggrandisement and promote the interest of a faction.

"I am with respect, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"GO. WASHINGTON.

"*Major-general Gates.*"

Indignation manifested by Wilkinson, at the exposition of General Gates's and Lord Sterling's perfidy.

This exposition unfolded to me a scene of perfidy and duplicity, of which I had no suspicion, and compared with General Gates's explanation to me, at York-town, must excite the abhorrence of every man of honour; I certainly gave vent to my feelings in a burst of indignation, but did not confine my reproaches to Generals Gates and Conway; because Lord Sterling was equally culpable for availing himself of the vile subserviency of his aid-de-camp, M'Williams, to misrepresent me in the secret information conveyed by him to General Washington; in consequence of which General Gates, had formed suspicions injurious to Colonel Hamilton, and designed his artful letter of the 8th December in the expectation of

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detecting the thief and disgracing the receiver; but being mortified and chagrined by his disappointment, he attempted to vindicate Conway, by converting Lord Sterling's information into a forgery, of which, to sooth his mortification and resentment, he determined to make me the author! Sad requital for all my services; monstrous deed! the justice of Heaven soon precipitated him from the pinnacle of undeserved fame to the abyss of humiliation—an object of compassion.*

But Lord Sterling in his letter to me of the 18th of March, explicitly admits that the conversation at Reading respecting Conway's letter, "*passed in a private company during a convivial hour,*" which flatly contradicts his report to General Washington and acquits me of dishonour; the whole tenor of General Gates's letter, to General Washington of December 8th, admits the existence of the fact which he afterwards denies, and the charge he makes, that "THOSE LETTERS HAVE BEEN STEALINGLY COPIED," emanated from the suspicion he

"*September 4th*, 1781.

"Dear Sir,

"I wish this letter may find you safe at home, and that you and the financier have effected every good purpose by your journey. In regard to myself, (for I know nothing of public affairs,) I remain in a most distressful situation, neither Congress nor General Washington having deigned to give me any answer to the letters, I wrote them upon my leaving Philadelphia. Oh P——s had I never left my peaceful cottage and paid but half the attention to my private concerns which I paid to the public's, my son had been alive, and my circumstances infinitely beyond what they now are; but by serving the United States I have lost one and almost ruined the other. I am now a General without pay, without provisions, without forage, and without every thing I ought in honour and conscience to be supplied with. The most implacable enemies, seldom carry resentments to such enormous lengths as those practised upon me. The base Carthaginians murdered Zantippus, and the cruel Spaniards murdered Columbus with chains; but I trust, American independence will be marked with more generous characters. I cannot write more than to request you will present our compliments to Mrs. P——s and family.

"Your's truly,

"HORATIO GATES.

"*R. P——s, Esq.*"

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attached to Colonel Hamilton, which alone could have induced him to stir the inquiry, in the awful and exigent manner he did in that letter; nor could any less extraordinary motive, have induced him to hazard the violation of the rules of decorum and the principles of service, by addressing the commander in chief on a subject of extreme delicacy, in an open letter transmitted through the President of Congress. But I trespass on the time of the reader, in this attempt to throw light on a subject, so ably and candidly discussed, at the time, by General Washington himself, as to cover his adversary with the shame and humiliation, betrayed in the following letter abounding with adulation and hypocrisy; wherein he appears to abandon the question and tacitly acknowledge, that he had been overreached by his own artifices.

"*York, Feb.* 19*th*, 1778.

"Sir,

"Yesterday I had the honour to receive your excellency's letter of the 9th instant, and earnestly hope no more of that time so precious to the public, may *be lost* upon the *subject* of *General Conway's letter*, whether that gentleman *does or does not deserve the suspicions you express, would be entirely indifferent to me*, did he not possess an office of high rank in the army of the United States, *for that reason solely*, I wish he may answer all the expectations of Congress. As to the gentleman I have no *personal connexion with him, nor had I any correspondence, previous to his writing the letter which has given offence*; NOR HAVE I SINCE WRITTEN TO HIM, *save to certify what I know to be the contents of the letter: he, therefore, must be responsible*; as I heartily dislike controversy even upon my own account and much more in a matter wherein I was only accidentally concerned. In regard to the parts of your excellency's letter addressed particularly to me *I solemnly declare that I am of no faction*; and if any of my letters taken aggregately or by paragraphs convey any meaning, which in any construction is offensive to your excellency, that was by no means

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the intention of the writer, after this, I cannot believe your excellency will either suffer your suspicions or the prejudices of others, to induce you to spend another moment upon this subject.

"With great respect, I am, Sir,

"Your excellency's

"Most obedient humble servant,

"HORATIO GATES.

"*His Excellency General Washington.*"

"*Valley Forge, Feb. 24th*, 1778.

"Sir,

"I yesterday received your favour of the 19th instant, I am as averse to controversy as any man, and had I not been forced into it, you never would have had occasion to impute to me, even a shadow of a disposition towards it. Your repeatedly and solemnly disclaiming any offensive views in these matters, which have been the subject of your past correspondence, makes me willing to close with the desire you express of burying them hereafter in silence, and, as far as future events will permit, oblivion.

"My temper leads me to peace and harmony with all men, and it is particularly my wish to avoid any personal feuds or dissensions with those who are embarked in the same great national interest with myself, as every difference of this kind must, in its consequences, be injurious.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"GO. WASHINGTON.

"*Major-general Gates.*"

But in respect to this letter of Conway about which such a noise was made, General Gates was so much pleased* with it, that he read it in triumph, and Conway himself, flattered by the applause he acquired from the

* See Gates's letter to Conway, Dec. 3d, 1777, page 374.

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enemies of General Washington for this performance, yielded to the *amour propre*, and made no secret of the contents;* and to these concurrent facts, the opinion of the bosom friend of General Gates might be added, to absolve me from the foul imputation levelled at my honour. Major-general Charles Lee thus expressed himself in a letter to General Gates, bearing date, "Philadelphia, March 29th, 1779. With respect to Wilkinson, I really think he has been a man more sinned against than any, I think (at least from all I have been able to gather) that he, as well as your honour, has been made a most egregious dupe in the affair between you. *It is a dark black piece of business, and I have no doubt will one day be disclosed to the world;* he was put on a wrong scent, when he aimed his pistol at your head, and you when you aimed at his. Alexander (pas le grand mais le gros) and his Hephæstion M'Williams were the proper objects of your respective resentments." And to fulfil the prediction of this singular compound of good and evil, of greatness and littleness, was among the incitements which determined me to undertake the toilsome duty, of leaving behind me these records of my independence, my disinterestedness, my innocence, my honour, and my persecutions.

After perusing the letters placed before me by General Washington, I explained to his entire satisfaction, General Gates's scandalous, but cunning allusion to my observation respecting Colonels Hamilton and Troup, and requested a copy of the letters, with which I was furnished; I retired soon after dinner to my quarters, I confess in no very pleasant mood, and determined to resign my appointment of secretary to the war department, which I carried into execution a few days after in the following letter.

"*Reading, March 29th,* 1778.

"Sir,

"While I make my acknowledgments to Congress for the appointment of secretary to the board of war and

* See Gordon, page 386.—Graydon's Memoirs, page 278.

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ordnance, I am sorry I should be constrained to resign that office; but after the acts of *treachery* and *falsehood*, in which I have detected Major-general Gates, the president of that board, it is impossible for me to reconcile it to my honour to serve with him.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,
"Your obedient servant,
"JAS. WILKINSON.

"*The Hon. Henry Laurens Esq.*
President of Congress."

I had previously resigned my brevet of brigadier-general on grounds of patriotism, but I still retained my commission of colonel, which never was to my knowledge revoked; yet the dominant influence of General Gates, and the feuds and factions and intrigues which prevailed in Congress and in the army at that day, threw me out of employ; but on the 24th day of July, 1779, the Congress appointed me clothier-general to the army of the United States, which office I accepted for the following reasons.

1st.—It discredited a report put in circulation, that I had by my conduct to General Gates, forfeited the public confidence.

2d.—It gratified my affections by associating me with my military friends, who were of the first rank and worth, and among them, I can name Greene, St. Clair, Smallwood, Knox, Wayne, O. Williams, H. Lee, &c.; and

3d.—It indulged my leading passion, by furnishing me the opportunity to witness and participate in the operations of the war.

I regret that the limits prescribed to these memoirs, should compel me in this place, to close my details of the incidents of the revolution, which fell under my own observation, or are founded on the information of conspicuous actors in the most interesting scenes; because practical knowledge is derived from observation and experience, which furnish the ablest guides to the statesman

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as well as the soldier. At a time of more leisure and convenience I shall resume the subject, and complete what I have begun, being persuaded that however I may fail to interest or amuse the reader, I shall perpetuate some facts which may be serviceable to the future historian. At present to compass the objects before me, and fulfil my engagements, I am obliged to invite the attention of my readers to matters of more recent date, which, if not so interesting, may be found more useful.

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CHAPTER X.

A glance at affairs on the western frontier in the autumn of 1806.—Aggressions of the citizens of the United States, with the connivance of the government.—Secret missions of Shaler and Robinson.—Declaration of Lord Temple in 1763.—Applicable to our own circumstances.—Salutary policy towards the Spanish Cortes, and the consequences.—Mr. Madison and Dr. Eustis.—Examination of the policy to be pursued relative to the Mexican provinces.—Their soil, climate and productions.—Effects of their emancipation.—Cause of the reflections made thereon.—Report of a tour from Nacogdoches to the city of Mexico and from thence to Vera Cruz and New Orleans.

CHAP. X.

THE pretensions of the United States to the unsettled western boundary of Louisiana, induced the Spanish government in the spring of 1806, to push forward a military corps and take possession of the country east of the Sabine river, as far as the Arroyo Honda, a small rivulet within six miles of Natchitoches, which the Spanish commander, Governor Herrara, claimed as the ancient boundary of the province of Texas. To repel the invasion, the President of the United States ordered a small body of troops, to be assembled at Natchitoches, where I found them unprepared, even, in the indispensable article of ammunition; as soon as this detachment was equipped for action, I advanced against the intruders, who prevented a collision of arms, by suddenly withdrawing behind the Sabine; and a pacific convention ensued, by which it was stipulated, that the ground between the Sabine and the Arroyo Honda, should not be entered on by the citizens or subjects of either party, pending the discussions between the two governments. This convention was respected by the Spaniards, but little regard was paid to it by the citizens of the United States. Subsequent to this incident, sundry aggressions have been made on the province of

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Texas, by our citizens in that quarter; not under the direct authority of our government, but, from the following circumstances it has been presumed, with its connivance. CHAP. X.

In the years 1812–13, a Mr. Shaler, who was considered a secret agent of the United States, took his station at Natchitoches, and I have good cause for belief, that this gentleman proceeded to the city of St. Antonio, and there joined the armament of General Toledo; but the adverse fortunes of the patriots, obliging him to retire from the Spanish province, he returned to the city of Washington, and has since received a foreign appointment of high trust. About the same time a Doctor Robinson, whom I had employed to accompany Captain Pike, in exploring the sources of Red River, was sent by the government, on a secret expedition, into the internal Spanish provinces, where he continued several months, and I saw him at New Orleans, as he returned to the seat of government to make his report, since which time I know not what has become of him; he was a favourite of General Pike, a man faithful to his country, and of great hardihood and enterprise. I am unacquainted with the particular service, on which those gentlemen were employed, for although in the chief military command, on the Mississippi, and possessing tenfold knowledge of the topography and population of the Mexican provinces, and of the political views of the Mexicans, founded on more than twenty years research, I received no intimation of the objects of those missions.

In the year 1763, when the celebrated William Pitt and his whig associates, were struggling against the current of executive influence, the increasing corruption of the British cabinet, and the party behind the throne, the virtuous Lord Temple exclaimed, "I detest with fervency and sincerity, a government of secresy, hypocrisy and treachery," and it rests with the people of these states, whom it vitally interests, to decide how far these deformed features may apply, to the administration of our own republican government; nor is it unworthy of inquiry, whether official malversations have not been countenan-

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ced, truths suppressed, and frauds and misrepresentations resorted to, to uphold personal ambition, and favour individual interests, in preference to the public weal. The public weal! alas! it has been long since sacrificed to factious influence; and the obliquity of treachery, is preferred to the rectitude of integrity.

To recur to our Spanish relations, although it might be presumptuous for me to say, what ought to have been the conduct of the executive towards that nation; yet, I have no hesitation to declare, if the decision had rested with me, the Cortes would have been acknowledged and their minister received, at a time, when the nation was engaged in defence of those sacred rights, which they assisted us to establish. Such a decision would have met the manly feelings of the country, and fostered the love of liberty in our own bosoms; it would have enlivened public spirit, and pointed the virtue of the patriot, with the honour of the man; and what would have been the result of this magnanimous policy? I am almost authorised to assert, and do verily believe, that our claims for spoliations would have been cancelled, by the concession of the Floridas, and the western limits of Louisiana would have been adjusted to our satisfaction: and thus the grounds of future wars would have been extinguished. But could we expect to find spirit or patriotism, or public virtue, in President Madison? Yes! Doctor Eustis has proclaimed to the world, that he is "the most perfect of men," and for the discovery, the Doctor has been recompensed with a diplomatic appointment, where none was necessary, at the expense of an hundred thousand dollars of the public treasure; a high price for a *spurt* of adulation.

But the error is irrecoverably past; and, now, should we inquire for that course of policy towards Spain, which may be most favourable to the United States, we shall find the question wrapped in perplexities, which deeply involve the best feelings and interests of confederated America. I will hazard a summary analysis of the subject, in the hope, that however foreign to the pursuits of my life, I may perchance give birth to a suggestion, sus-

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ceptible of improvement by those who may be endowed with superior intelligence.

It will be admitted on all hands, that the integrity of the union is the palladium of our political salvation, and the preservation of the national government, indispensable to our social rights and happiness; these form, or should form, the great primary objects of our cares and solicitudes, and of consequence that course of policy ought to be preferred, which is best calculated to preserve and perpetuate them. Then let us inquire, whether the union and the constitution of these states, may be best supported and protected, by restraining our enterprise to legitimate bounds, and confining our political pursuits to our own national limits; leaving all other powers and people, to the unmolested enjoyment of those indefeasible rights, which we ourselves claim; "to manage our own affairs in our own way?" or whether those fundamental rights and interests may be best secured, by stepping over the national bounds, and violating the sovereignty of a power at peace with us, expressly to establish the independence of a people, solicitous for an alliance with us, founded on local interests and political sympathy; and who in a state of freedom, would, from their proximity and their population, become a powerful ally; or reduced to a state of vassalage under an enterprising prince, might, from the same causes, be converted into unfriendly neighbours, or dangerous enemies.

The candid examination of these propositions in their order, will on one hand present to the citizens of the United States, the sources of peace, safety, progressive improvement, national prosperity and individual happiness, with the full enjoyment of those rights, powers and relations, which are essential to the peaceful adjustment of our controversies with Spain, by amicable negociation on grounds of equity. But on the other hand, a very different prospect is presented to the American people, more glorious indeed but less felicitous; we behold it pregnant with war and productive of expense, but it will increase our present power, exalt our national character, swell

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our political importance, open to us new sources of wealth and give liberty to millions. This is the fair side of the picture; let us look at the reverse, it will augment executive patronage and multiply the sources of corruption; it will open a boundless range, to the enterprise and ambition of our adventurous countrymen; will dissipate our population, and by distending the bounds of the union will accelerate its dissolution.

Such are the political consequences, but let us see what may be the natural effects, of our political association with independent Spanish America. The Mexican kingdoms taken in their extent, from the isthmus of Darien to the source of the Riò Bravo, produce a greater variety of necessaries, comforts and luxuries, than any equal portion of the globe; where, besides, can we find every fruit and every product, which grows in the western hemisphere, with lead, iron, copper, silver, and gold? the surface of this section of the Spanish Indies is diversified by hills, vales, mountains, and plains, the arable part of which is represented to be exceedingly luxuriant; it abounds with flocks and herds, and its population at the present time can be little short of eight millions, which under a free government must increase rapidly, the climate being divine; the cotton plant when cultivated is quadrennial, the third crop being the most productive; it differs from that of the United States in colour and quality, and I have understood is preferable. The soil in the appropriate latitude is very favourable to the culture of sugar, and I have seen specimens from Vera Cruz of superior quality. Self-government in such a region will expand the intellect, and must excite enterprise and industry, which will soon be followed by the civil arts, agriculture and commerce; and then the immense plains of Texas, embracing millions of acres, may be changed from a state of nature into compact sugar and cotton plantations, and Mattagorda become a port of primary importance.

With the most favourable dispositions towards the Mexican people, whose cause cannot be indifferent to a

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man who worships human rights, as the richest earthly treasure, I have been led by the paramount duty to my country to submit to my fellow citizens, these limited views of a most important question to themselves and posterity. There can be no doubt that the independence of the Mexican kingdoms may be established by the mere volition of the United States, and if we consult our feelings only, that sympathy which springs out of the analogy of their present circumstances to our own former condition, would impel us to take arms for their emancipation; but if we temper our sensibilities with sound discretion and sober reason, suggestions well worthy consideration may arise out of the paramount obligations of self-preservation.

With due deference I submit these speculations to the good sense of my countrymen, and shall proceed to lay before them the substance of a report, which, in the present agitation of Mexican affairs, cannot fail to interest the reader.

As soon as I had disengaged myself from the Spaniards at the Sabine River, in the autumn of 1806, and was satisfied an illicit project was on foot, which menaced the Spanish provinces, as well as the peace of the United States, I determined, on grounds of public duty and professional enterprise, to attempt to penetrate the veil, which concealed the topographical route to the city of Mexico, and the military defences which intervened, feeling that the equivocal relations of the two countries justified the *ruse*. To facilitate my views, I prepared a suitable passport, and committed the execution of the design to a dear and honoured friend, whose zeal and patriotism, were unequalled but by his integrity, and honour, and his fitness for the undertaking.

"*To all Persons whom these Presents may concern:*—

"KNOW YE—That whereas ———, at the head of a powerful combination of lawless citizens of the United States, in violation of the laws of the said states, and without the privity of the government, is preparing to carry an expedition into the territories of his Catholic

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CHAP. X. Majesty, a prince at peace with the United States; I have thought proper, agreeably to the principles of good faith, and to exonerate my government from any participation in the sinister project, to authorise the bearer hereof ———, to pass all guards and garrisons of the United States, and to proceed to the city of Mexico, for the purpose of rendering to the viceroy a detailed report of said ——'s plans and designs.

"Given at Natchez, territory of the Mississippi, November 15th, 1806. Witness my hand and seal of arms.

[SEAL.] (Signed) "JA. WILKINSON."

Extract from a report rendered to Brigadier-general Wilkinson, by Col. ——, dated New Orleans, Mar. 7th, 1807.

"I am about to give you an account of my late trip, which being altogether from memory, cannot be so correct as I could desire, or you may expect. I have been hurried over a road of more than twelve hundred miles, fearful of making inquiry lest I should be suspected, and obliged therefore to trust to transient observation, and the information incidental to conversation.

"To avoid confusion, I have drawn up a description of the route and distances, which you will find annexed; and in this letter I shall confine myself to such observations and occurrences, as I can clearly recollect and are worthy of notice.

"I arrived at Nacogdoches without obstruction on the 29th November. At this place Governor Herrera* was in command, to whom I shewed your passport, which gave him much alarm. The place I filled in the campaign, gave me unexpected importance, but he was very anxious to know every thing about ——, and his plans. I said enough to increase his apprehension; observing, I was prohibited giving the particulars to any person but the viceroy, pretending great indifference whether I proceeded or not.

* This gentleman was made prisoner at St. Antonio, by a body of insurgents, and with a number of officers, was murdered in cold blood.

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"After a delay of four days he informed me I might proceed, and that he would send his son with me, under the very civil pretence of accommodating me, but in fact to have a watch over me. He told me —— and —— were at St. Antonio, and advised me to leave that place on my right, and pass by La Bahia. It seemed, that having made up his mind to let me go on, he was desirous of having the credit of sending me.

"I accordingly set out on horseback, accompanied by young ——, on the 6th of December; but on my arrival at La Bahia, found a messenger with an *invitation*, but in effect an order, from ——, to visit him at St. Antonio. Here I found the Captain-general and Governor ——. He received me very politely, and after having my passport explained, appeared satisfied, and observed "it was a strong evidence of good faith;" but seemed desirous to receive every thing I had to communicate, and to save me the trouble of a ride to Mexico, by expatiating on the length of the route, and the difficulties I should have to encounter; but the objection I made to —— was repeated to him, and had the same effect, for I was considered under military command, (in spite of whatever I could say to the contrary,) and therefore had no discretion left me. I had about an hour's conversation with this gentleman, during which he requested —— to withdraw; he seemed to be well satisfied with the result of the last campaign, and expressed strong wishes that the peace of the two countries should be preserved. I found him a man of the world and of information.

"I learnt that his government was quite independent of the viceroy, and that he was empowered to demand from him, six thousand regular troops for the defence of his provinces, whenever he judged it to be necessary; that he had made this demand the last year, but that the viceroy had sent him only militia; it was however intimated, that the case would be different the approaching season.

"He gave me to understand that his force was formidable, and that the frontier would be reinforced this

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spring; but nothing fell from him indicative of an hostile intention towards the United States; yet he contradicted himself, for speaking of —— with detestation, he said, "He wished he had troops to enable him to co-operate with us."

"As I did not resume my route by La Bahia, this may be the most proper place to offer the reflections which arose from my view of the situation of that place. It is a paltry village, situate on an eminence on the right bank of the river St. Antonio, about thirty miles from its efflux into the bay of St. Bernard, or Matagorda, which is capable of admitting vessels of any burthen, and of receiving a fleet. I am pretty well assured, that the Spaniards are preparing to form a strong establishment at this point, and to make it a place of arms; and I have no doubt it will be found an important position, to oppose any irruption into the interior provinces from this quarter, which I believe to be the only route by which a successful attempt can be made, to conquer or rescue the kingdoms of Mexico: therefore, should the United States find it necessary, to act for or against that country, it should be a primary object to get possession of this port, which from its situation could be easily defended, and where our stores of ammunition, artillery and provisions should be deposited; as no obstacle to the march of an army will be found between Nacogdoches and that place, the intermediate country being, as you will observe by the adjoined notes, almost a continual plain, with no rivers which are not easily fordable, and without defiles.

"I left General —— on the 20th of December, and took the direct route from St. Antonio to Larredo, on the left bank of Rio Grande, which I reached on the 24th, the distance being computed at 120 miles, making a difference of miles in favour of the route by La Bahia, which is also preferable on account of water. From Nacogdoches to this place, we pass through a country wild, uncultivated, and generally bare of wood, but of luxuriant soil, and yet exhibiting the miserable settlements of Na-

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cogdoches, St. Antonio, La Bahia and Larredo only, with a population of eight or ten thousand souls, strangers to the civil arts, and subsisting principally by the chase. This country abounds with deer, buffaloe and wild horses, but furnishes few domestic herds or flocks.

"I crossed the Rio Grande on Christmas day, and reached Monte del Rey, on the first of January, passing through two or three villages on my route. The population increases after we leave Larredo, and the country abounds with domestic animals, almost beyond credibility; the price of a bull or cow (there are few oxen) being from three to six dollars, of a sheep from half a dollar to a dollar, and in proportion for horses and mules, in thousands and tens of thousands.

"From Rio Grande the country rises, and you find the surface broken as you approach Monte del Rey, within thirty or forty miles of which place, you first discern distant mountains. This is a small city, the capital of the province of New Leon, and subject to the viceroy of Mexico, situated near the foot of a mountain, and is indifferently built; the houses are very generally formed of cubical masses of indurated clay, which by drying take the appearance of stone, but are not proof against the torrents of rain, which fall during the summer almost without intermission; the remains of several were shewn me, which had been washed away the preceding summer: I however observed several private buildings of stone, which looked well; their public edifices are superb. At this place you discover the first traces of European manners.

"The population of this province was reported to me at 80,000. I ventured to inquire what that of the city might be, but got no satisfaction: I think it cannot exceed 12,000 souls.

"I departed from Monte del Rey the 3d of January, and immediately found myself surrounded by hills; the road generally winding through vallies, but sometimes passing over rough undulating grounds. I reached Saltie or Saltille, on the 5th. This place is thinly settled,

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and offered the first appearance of cultivation, but in miserable style indeed, yet producing wheat and Indian corn. Saltille is situate on the north-east side of a hill, and overlooks a beautiful and extensive plain, partially cultivated: it is something larger than Monte del Rey, and the style of building precisely the same. This place is remarkable for an annual fair, held in September, and established by custom of ancient date, at which the merchants, traders, mule-sellers, and a host of people from the city of Mexico and the southern and internal provinces, assemble for the purposes of barter and sale: it is also the residence of the treasurer of the internal provinces subject to Salcedo. Adjoined to Saltille is a large Indian town, the first I saw, the population of which is estimated at 40,000 souls.

"This people enjoy a government independent of the officers of Saltille; they choose their governor from their own body, subject to the approval of the sovereign, and select their magistrates without approval, who regulate all matters of police, and determine all civil controversies; of their procedure in criminal cases, I could get no information: they have a protector appointed by government, whose duty it is to watch over their interests, and see that they are not abused by the officers of the province. I observed at this place an aqueduct well built of stone, which conducted a copious stream of water across a valley, for the supply of the town.

"I pursued my journey on the 6th for the city of St. Louis Potosi, and reached it on the 13th, generally over a most wretched sterile country, presenting little else than stunted palms and thorn, which did not afford even a shade from the ardent rays of the sun. The road is good, over a surface rather flat; but it is very thinly settled, and gives very few instances of agriculture; I lay in the open air in this distance two nights out of seven. This city is spacious and well built of stone, seated on a plain, and garrisoned by a small body of regular troops, under the command of an inspector, with the rank of colonel; the population must be between fifty and sixty

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thousand souls. On the evening of my arrival, after I had waited on the inspector, and received a new passport, an orderly sergeant called on me to say, that a gentleman was setting out for the city of Mexico the next morning, and would be glad to accommodate me in his coach. In order to see and observe, it was necessary I should keep my horse, and therefore I declined the invitation, saying that I had a companion; the sergeant requested me to be particular in my reply, as he said he had to "report to his superior." Soon after this a very genteel man presented himself to me, renewed the offer which had been made through the sergeant, and proffered a seat in his coach to my companion, young ——— also, stating to me at the same time, that the route was a bad one, and that I should be saved great exposition and fatigue by accompanying him. Still desirous to avoid the carriage, I alleged that I had an interpreter with me; but he got over this difficulty by observing, he could make a cadet who accompanied him go on horseback, and then having no other shift, I was obliged to accept the proposition. This —— was the friend of the inspector, and I clearly perceived was acting under his direction, but with what policy I could not divine. Thus I found myself compelled by a feigned civility, to shut myself up in a Spanish coach drawn by seven mules, or to subject myself to suspicions, which it was my business to avoid. I left St. Louis Potosi with ——, on the 14th, and reached St. Miguel le Grande on the 17th. This city is situated on the acclivity of a steep hill, and might be rendered a formidable pass, but is without works or guards; the houses of the officers and gentry, as well as the public buildings, are of stone, but the greater part are of indurated clay: this is a considerable place, but I had not an opportunity to form an idea of its population. I found my conductor to be a native of Spain, and a man of education and discernment; but he did not offer a question or conjecture as to my business, nor did he drop a word respecting the politics of his country, until he reached Mexico.

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"We departed from St. Miguel the 18th, and reached the small town of St. Juan del Rio, the next day. This town is called after a river of the same name, on the right bank of which it is situate; it is a small stream, and was nearly dry when we crossed it, but I presume rises very much in the rainy season, from its having a high stone bridge thrown over it. I discerned nothing worthy of remark at this place, which we left on the 20th, in the morning, and passing several Indian villages, some of them of considerable extent, reached the capital on the morning of the 23d.

"The country from St. Louis Potosi, through which my route lay (I was told there were several others,) is generally smooth, but intersected by some hills and rough and rocky grounds. I noticed one remarkable defile, formed by a mountain on the right, and a precipice on the left, but I cannot recollect its locality. As we approached the city, cultivation appeared to improve; yet even adjoining to it, I discovered nothing which an American would naturally expect to find in the vicinity of a capital city, and the entire defect of timber throughout my whole route, left me at a loss to know how the inhabitants found wood for building or fuel. To my inquiries on this subject, the reply was that timber for building was brought from the sides of the mountains.

"On my arrival I put up at a hotel, and as soon as I had changed my dress, was conducted by the adjutant of the palace to the viceroy, to whom I was introduced at a public audience: he received me with much coolness and indifference, and had me informed immediately, that he was engaged for two days, and when he wanted to see me, would let me know. I was aware that —— and —— might have advised him of my approach, and the motives of my visit; but I could not conjecture why he should treat the information with such slight, and so very differently from those officers. On the third day afterwards I was sent for to attend the viceroy, and found him with an interpreter, and two other persons; he received me politely but coldly, and with evident distrust, and with-

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out desiring any information from me, observed that he had been advised before my arrival, of ——'s intended expedition by ——, and even by the gazettes of this city, which had preceded me three days, and intimated that my information could be of no consequence, but said that the intention appeared to be fair and honourable. Very few words passed, and I asked him to favour me with a passport, and to allow me to return by sea, to which he instantly assented as it appeared to me, without reflection. On recurring to this scene, I can but suspect the information given by ——, was not of a nature to give alarm, and to this cause I impute the viceroy's "*sang froid.*"

"The route to Vera Cruz being well known, I had determined to return by land, on a road different from that by which I had travelled; but my expenses had overrun my purse, and left me without the means to execute this purpose.

"The next morning I received my passport, giving me leave to depart when I pleased. This day ——, who had been very attentive to me, called and pressed me to accept his purse, which I rejected, telling him I had no occasion for it: with what view this was done I could not guess.

"The evening after my last interview with the viceroy, the ——, for the first time, opened his lips on the object of my visit; he observed "he had heard the motive of my journey had been to convey important intelligence to the viceroy; that he wished to avoid any question which might be improper, but requested me, if I could do it with propriety, to inform him whether I had given the names of any traitors in the country to the viceroy." My reply was that I had not. "But perhaps you would have done so," replied he, "if the viceroy had behaved to you in a different manner?" I answered, "No, Sir, I would not. I did not come here to implicate any individual of this country, but to put the government on its guard against a lawless attack, by a banditti of my own countrymen." "But," said he,

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"should the viceroy change his conduct towards you, might you not be induced to give up their names?" I felt some emotion and replied warmly, "No, if the viceroy were to go on his knees, I would not give him a name." I had marked his countenance, which was overcast with deep solicitude, but he now respired profoundly, his countenance brightened, and he appeared greatly relieved. A moment after, he *recollected* that the post would go out in the morning, and requested my permission to write a line to a friend, which he did in my presence, and shortly after withdrew. The next day he called according to his usual custom, and after a few common observations, turned the subject to the state of Europe and the situation of Spanish America; he observed that it did not appear possible to resist the gigantic power of France; acknowledged that Spain was in a state of complete vassalage, but observed that the king was still on the throne, and that as a soldier and a Spaniard, he felt bound by the oath he had taken to obey him; but, said he, "let Bonaparte once touch our king, and we shall then assume a different attitude," and expressed his belief that this must happen; because, said he, "I cannot think Bonaparte will be perfectly satisfied while there remains a Bourbon on a throne." I replied, that it appeared to me, the difference between his present situation, and that which he very justly anticipated, was rather nominal than substantial; to which he readily assented, but observed, "that names had weight in all countries, and with almost all men." This gentleman appeared deeply interested by my visit, and prayed my correspondence. From a careful review of his whole conduct, I have little doubt some plan of revolt is thought of in the Mexican provinces, immediate or remote; and he was alarmed lest some circumstances of it should have transpired, which I had come to report to the viceroy.

"The second day after I had received my passport, although it gave me leave to go when I pleased, the adjutant of the palace waited on me from the viceroy, to tell me I might "*leave the city as soon as I pleased.*"

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The hint was sufficient and I lost no time in taking the road for Vera Cruz.

"From the city of Mexico you cross the plain about two and a half leagues to the eastward, when you begin to ascend that immense chain of rocky heights which separates it from the sea. The road through this broken, rough tract, has been highly finished by immense labour and expense, and we find every spot of arable ground in cultivation. At seventy-five miles from Mexico we entered Puebla, one of the most respectable cities of the kingdom. The population is estimated at eighty thousand souls, and several manufactures are pushed here with industry, particularly in hardware, calicoes and cloths, but it is without fortifications.

"Speaking of manufactures, it may not be uninteresting to remark in this place, that from Monte del Rey through the whole country which I passed, I observed the women engaged in domestic manufactures of wool and cotton, from whence and from the clothing of the inhabitants, I infer that the much greater part of it is provided in this way.

"From Puebla to Xalappa the distance is sixty-six miles, and the country continues to rise until you get within 25 or 30 miles of the last place, when you begin to descend. In this distance we pass Perotte, a small town of little importance, where the road branches in going to Mexico; near this place, in a plain, stands a quadrangular work with a garrison of regular troops, in which the treasure destined for exportation is deposited, a precaution against the insecurity of Vera Cruz; the city of Xalappa stands on the summit of a hill, it is respectable in size and well built of stone, but its chief importance is as a summer retreat from Vera Cruz; here I found a body of troops quartered, consisting of flying artillery, cavalry, and infantry, said to be six thousand in number. I remained at this place two nights and a day, and spent the time altogether, in company with the public officers civil and military, with whom I had much interesting conversation, which excited great surprise; you

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may form some idea of it; when I assure you that in a large circle of officers, civil and military, some of them of high rank, the sentiments I had heard in Mexico, were sported to an extent, and with a degree of boldness which astonished me, an officer of rank being present who had spent some time in the United States; on one hand, our government furnished a theme of admiration, with all who could speak to my understanding, and on the other the tyranny of Bonaparte was reprobated. They expressed their apprehensions, that he would extend his dominion over all Europe, in which case they avowed their determination to declare for independence, and seek the alliance of the United States. They acknowledged frankly and with strong sensibility, that they knew all their treasures went into his coffers, and served to assist him in establishing his project of universal despotism; from whatever I could discern in the manner of the company, I believe it was pervaded by one sentiment, and I could but remark, that the intimate friend of ——, with whom I dined in Mexico, preceded me at Xalappa, and waited on me soon after I alighted from my carriage; at this place all your proceedings in this city were publicly known, but no idea of apprehension seemed to be entertained, either of —— or of any foreign power.

"I left Xalappa on the 4th and reached Vera Cruz on the 5th, descending and passing over rugged, rocky grounds, until I reached the river Antigua, five leagues from Vera Cruz, which I crossed at the site of old Vera Cruz, from whence the road is flat and sandy, bordering on the sea shore for four or five miles of the distance.

"On reaching Vera Cruz I waited on the Governor, and found orders had preceded me, to put me on board the first vessel, or if none was ready to order me back to Xalappa; a very small and indifferent schooner was about to sail, and I was ordered on board or to return to Xalappa; a strong north-east wind however came on and lasted five days, at the end of which I determined to take

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my chance on board the little vessel, and accordingly embarked for this city.

"The city, harbour, and defences of Vera Cruz, are too well known, to render any description I could give desirable. I will barely observe, that the harbour is an exposed road-stead, and that during the autumn and winter months, the north winds are strong and the coast extremely dangerous, and during the spring and summer months the climate is destructive to our constitutions. The sum of my reflections on what I have seen, applicable to military views are, that either to conquer or to rescue the Mexicans, the route by Grande river and Monte del Rey is the most favourable, and that any attempt by Vera Cruz will be found impracticable; for supposing that city to be carried, the country behind can be defended by a small corps, against any body of men who may be brought to attack it; besides, were the attempt practicable, the operations must be protracted, and the diseases of the climate would destroy any European or American army, without the aid of the sword. But once at Monte del Rey, you find yourself in a high, healthy country, abounding with horses and provisions, with your rear safe and open for reinforcements or retreat; from this point it will require a few days march only, to cut off the intercourse and a junction of force, between the interior and the southern provinces, and you may then either fight or retreat with advantage. But the idea that the country is to be overrun by a handful of men is absurd, the extent of the route and of the population, would oppose insuperable obstacles to such an attempt, and no calculation can be made on the revolt of the inhabitants, unless they are invaded by a force sufficient, either to reduce or to protect them against the regular military, which I have reason to believe has been, or soon will be, increased to twenty thousand men. It is certain, that although they have some European officers of experience, the number is very small, and that in general they are unlettered and ignorant, but it is equally

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true that the natives are hardy robust fellows, and furnish good stuff for soldiers.

"Without descending to minutiæ on a subject which is familiar to you, I will just observe, that any army operating against the Mexican provinces, should be liberally provided with flying artillery, and should be composed one-fifth of cavalry."

Notes of the route from Nacogdoches to the city of Mexico, and from thence to Vera Cruz.

"From Nacogdoches to the river Trinity, I call the distance one hundred miles. At this place the Spaniards have a lieutenant and eight or ten men. The ford of the river is a good one.

"From the Trinity to the river Brassos seventy miles, which is also fordable, and the right bank elevated.

"From the Brassos to the Colorado sixty miles, where we have a good ford.

"From the Colorado to the river St. Marc, I think it is about sixty miles; a rapid current and rocky bottom, but fordable without much difficulty.

"From St Marc to the river Guadaloupe, I compute the distance to be sixty miles, and the ford is plain and easy. Here the road branches, the left leading to La Bahia, and the right to the city of St. Antonio.

"From the Gaudaloupe to the town of La Bahia, standing on the right bank of the river St. Antonio, the distance is twenty-four miles; this river is also fordable.

"From La Bahia to the city of St. Antonio, seventy-five miles; and from St. Antonio to Larredo, on the left bank of the Rio Grande, one hundred and twenty miles. I passed perforce by St. Antonio, which place I visited from La Bahia; therefore the seventy-five miles between those places and the difference of the routes, which I do not understand, must be deducted to give the nearest distance from Nacogdoches to Rio Grande. This river, where I crossed it, is not more than two hundred and

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fifty yards wide, but it was not fordable at that time, and I doubt whether it ever is.

"From the Rio Grande I passed three inconsiderable villages to the city of Monte del Rey, which I call one hundred and fifty miles; making a distance, by my estimate, of six hundred and ninety-nine miles; from which the preceding deductions being made, the distance will be found less than six hundred miles, which, though much shorter than that generally computed, will, I think, be equal to the true one.

"In the whole of this route we found no obstacle to the march of an army excepting the Rio Grande, which must be bridged, boated or rafted, and an island in the middle affords facility to the traverse.

"From Nacogdoches to the Trinity, we have a forest interspersed with some considerable prairies. From the Trinity to Rio Grande continued prairies, high and firm, with a wavy surface, interspersed with groves and clumps. From Rio Grande to Monte del Rey you proceed over the same kind of surface, until you approach within thirty miles of that city, where the ground becomes hilly and a little broken, but naked and with some stone. There are three roads from Rio Grande to Monte del Rey, differing in length, but all easy and without obstructions.

"From Monte del Rey to Saltie, or Saltille, the distance is fifty miles; the road stony and rough, and in several places commanded by heights.

"From Saltie to St. Louis Potosi, the distance is about two hundred miles; the road is good, but passes over uneven ground, from whence you have mountains continually in prospect.

"From St. Louis Potosi to St. Miguel le Grande, the distance is one hundred and ten miles; the road good, and passing over several extensive plains partly cultivated.

"From St. Miguel le Grande to St. Juan del Rio, the distance is seventy miles, and the road generally good.

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"From St. Juan del Rio to the city of Mexico, passing a number of considerable Indian villages, whose names I do not recollect, the distance is one hundred and ten miles, over a spacious and fine road.

"From the city of Mexico the route to Vera Cruz is so well known, and having myself travelled most of the way in a coach, and being obliged to observe great circumspection, I fear I can give you no new light on the subject; but I will offer the substance of my recollection. From Mexico to Puebla, the distance is seventy-five miles; the road superb, but ascending from the vicinity of the city, and the surface of the country generally rocky. From Puebla, passing through Perotte to Xalappa, the distance is sixty-six miles; the road and face of the country nearly the same.

"In this distance we ascend to the height of the land, and descend twenty-five or thirty miles to Xalappa.

"From Xalappa to Vera Cruz, the distance is about fifty miles, a continued descent, most of the way over a rough and rocky surface: in the distance you pass a handsome river, about 180 yards wide, but fordable, with a village on its left bank on the site of the ancient Vera Cruz; both the village and river called Antigua."

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CHAPTER XI.

CHAP. XI.

Equivocal conduct of Spain, respecting line of limits, in 1797.—American posts on the Mississippi reinforced.—General Wilkinson descends the river with a detachment in the spring of 1798.—Difficulties removed and the commissioners proceed to mark the line.—He takes post at Loftus's Heights.—Is ordered to New York in the spring of 1799, by Major-general Hamilton.—Arrives there the 1st of August.—His conference with General Hamilton.—Anecdote of the General and Colonel Burr.—Submits a memoir to the General, embracing the force and the disposition of the old troops of the United States, with the occupancies of the contiguous foreign powers, on the northern, western, and southern frontiers; and comprehending a variety of facts and reflections, military and political, respecting the St. Lawrence, the lakes and the Mississippi.—Visits Boston and returns.—His memoir approved by General Washington, and measures taken to carry it into effect.—Accommodation of differences with France, and reduction of the army.—Dr. George Logan visits France.—The effects of this visit.—Different views of General Hamilton's character.—Motives of his political conduct explained.—A glance at Mr. Madison's conduct in the federal convention.—Comparison between him and Gen. Hamilton.—Gen. Wilkinson's persecutions in 1810 and 1811.—Ordered to New Orleans in 1812.—Conduct of Great Britain and Bonaparte to the United States—The effects of war.—Observations thereon.—The federal government not adapted to a state of war.—John Henry's explosion.—Reflections thereon.—Conversation with the secretary of war, Dr. Eustis, respecting war.—Motives for purchasing Henry's breach of trust.—Conduct of the oppositionists in Massachusetts to the measures of government condemned.—Opinion of the yeomanry of New England.—General Wilkinson determines to call the attention of the executive to the defensive protection of New Orleans.—Receives a letter from the secretary of war, and

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submits a memoir to him.—Orders received, and correspondence which ensued.—Lays his memoir before the Hon. Colonel Johnson and Henry Clay, esquire, of Congress.—Reflections thereon, and the effects produced.

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In the spring of 1797, the equivocal conduct of the Spanish authorities of Louisiana in relation to the treaty of limits, &c. induced me to reinforce our military posts on the Mississippi; and for this service I selected Captain Isaac Guion, an officer of tried confidence and approved intelligence, who had served with General Montgomery before Quebec, and possessed great energy of character. The discussions which ensued, and the pretexts urged by the Spaniards for delaying the line of demarcation, conspiring with other circumstances which had come to the knowledge of the American government, produced suspicions of a meditated infraction of the treaty on the part of Spain; in consequence of which I was ordered from Pittsburgh in the spring of 1798, to descend the waters to our western frontier, with a respectable force; having by order of the executive previously addressed a frank and firm remonstrance to the Spanish governor Gayoso, on the subject, which it would seem produced the desired effect; for on my arrival in the low country, I found the commissioners were proceeding amicably on the survey of the line of limits. I am sorry my peculiar situation should prevent my dilating on this topic in these memoirs, but I will refer the reader to the second volume, for several interesting particulars touching the subject.

I found our advanced post at Natchez, which I immediately removed, and sat down at Loftus's Heights, with my whole force, that being the most southerly tenable position within our limits on the bank of the Mississippi, about six miles north of the 31st degree of North latitude. Whilst engaged at this point, preparing quarters for the troops, and erecting batteries to command the river, I received the following letter from Major-general Hamilton.

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"*New York, Feb. 12th*, 1799.

"Sir,

"The interesting incidents which have latterly occurred in our political situation, having rendered it expedient to enlarge the sphere of our military arrangements, it has in consequence become necessary to regulate the superintendence of our military force in its various and detached positions, in such a manner as while it will serve to disburthen the department of war, *of details incompatible with its more general and more important occupations*, will likewise conduce to uniformity and system in the different branches of the service.

"The commander in chief having for the present declined actual command, it has been determined, in pursuance of the above views, to place the military force every where, under the superintendence of Major-general Pinckney and myself. In the allotment for this purpose, my agency is extended to the garrisons on the western lakes, and to all the troops in the north western territory, including both banks of the Ohio, and upon the Mississippi; in short to all the western army, except the parts which may be in the states of Tennessee and Kentucky. Of this you will have been informed by the secretary of war.

"From the relation which is thus constituted between us, I allow myself to anticipate great mutual satisfaction. Every disposition on my part will certainly facilitate it, and tend to promote the discharge of your trust, in the manner best adapted to your honour and the advancement of the service.

"It was the united opinion of the commander in chief,* General Pinckney and myself, when lately convened at Philadelphia, that your speedy presence in this quarter was necessary, towards a full discussion of the affairs of the scene, in which you have so long had the direction in their various relations, and towards the formation, with the aid of your lights, of a more perfect plan for present

* General Washington.

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and eventual arrangements. Much may be examined in a personal interview, which at so great a distance cannot be effected by writing. The actual and probable situation of our public affairs, in reference to foreign powers, renders this step indispensable. You will therefore be pleased, with all practicable expedition, to repair to Philadelphia; upon your arrival there giving me immediate advice of it. If this can be most conveniently accomplished by way of New Orleans, you are at liberty to take that route. On this point you are the best judge, and will no doubt act with circumspection.

"It must rest with you to dispose of the command of the troops at the different stations, during your absence, and to give the proper instructions in conformity with those which have been received from the secretary of war. On this head only one remark will be made. The confidence in your judgment has probably led to the reposing in your discretion, powers too delicate to be intrusted to an officer less tried; capable perhaps of being so used as to commit prematurely the peace of the United States. Discretions of this tendency ought not to be transferred, beyond what may be indispensable for defensive security. Care must be taken that the nation *be not embroiled*, but in consequence of *a deliberate policy in the government.*

"Official letters from you to me, as you have been apprised by the secretary at war, are to be forwarded through him; they must be open and under cover. The design of this is, that he may have an opportunity, in cases of great urgency, which could not conveniently wait for my direction, to interpose with the requisite measures. In your absence, it will be proper that the officer or officers you may substitute in the command, should communicate with you; also transmitting their letters open under cover to the secretary at war. *This will preserve unbroken the chain of your command.*

"With great consideration, &c. &c.

(Signed) "A. HAMILTON.

"*Brigadier-general Wilkinson.*"

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The liberal perspicuous tenor of this letter,* so unlike the official correspondence to which I had been accustomed, excited my admiration and flattered my self love. I had been personally, not intimately, acquainted with General Hamilton in the course of the revolutionary war; I had commanded him, and was now to receive orders from him; I felt a twinge of repugnance, but it was momentary; the corps I had commanded was a mere skeleton, which the government had thought proper to augment and organise anew, under the national chief, and although not promoted, my command was increased and my authority extended. My military pride, however sensible, (and there can be no soldier without it) could not on cool deliberation find an exception to the elevation of gentlemen with whose political characters and merits, it would have been the extreme of vanity in me to pretend to enter into a competition, and whose association I was sensible would add to the weight and importance of my profession.

Pursuant to the orders of General Hamilton I proceeded by New Orleans and after some delay there obtained a passage direct to New York, where I arrived the 1st of August; I immediately called on the General and left my card: he returned my visit the next morning, and at our meeting shewed some sensibility, for which I respected his heart, and remunerated him without loss of time, by observing to him, "that considering my superior rank during the revolution, and my subsequent military services, it might be presumed there would be some opposition to his command in my mind; but that however tenacious of rank, whatever might be my professional pride, and I acknowledged an ample share of it, I should be vain and weak indeed, did I oppose my pretensions or my

* I mean neither offence nor indelicacy, when I recommend it to the attention of the secretary of war, for an example of principle and consistency, on which the charms and interests of the profession depends, long since abolished by his predecessors, who with bloated pretensions possessed little knowledge of the duties of their stations.

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talents to his, that I believed the course he had run, and the services he had rendered, gave him a title to the appointment he had received, and that I should take his orders with satisfaction;" he was affected, and laying his right hand on his breast replied, "upon my word, General Wilkinson, I admire this frankness, and shall not shew myself unworthy of the example; I have not experienced the same obliging concession from other quarters;" he was proceeding, when a messenger required his presence in court, which was then sitting; and having appointed the next afternoon for an interview, we parted.

I waited on the General agreeably to appointment, and opened the conversation by observing, "that in obedience to his order of the 12th February, I presented myself to receive his commands, but before entering on business, I considered it a matter of propriety towards him and of duty to myself, to remark, that my ignorance of his personal sentiments, and my knowledge of the secret slanders by which, I had been assailed during his administration of the treasury department, enjoined the utmost circumspection on my part; I therefore begged leave to premise, that should the objects for which I had been recalled from the Mississippi require formal reports, I hoped he would apprise me, whether I should confine myself to strict official forms, or might add such political facts and reflections as appeared to me essential to his information. That in the last case relying on his confidence, I should bare my bosom to him, and that in the first he would find me dumb to all but specific objects of professional duty;" he answered, "I have no objection General Wilkinson to indulge your desire, nor will I hesitate to tell you, Sir, that I sent for you, to borrow the information which I have in vain sought for elsewhere; estranged from military pursuits, since the revolution, my faculties have been directed to different objects; you know how easy it is for a soldier to forget the mechanical parts of his profession, which is my case; I have grown rusty in military affairs, and have in reality forgotten much of what I learnt in the war of the revolu-

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tion, and wish to avail myself of your knowledge; you therefore cannot be too diffuse in your communications; I am not a man of professions, but on a further acquaintance, I think, you will find something here, (laying his hand on his breast) trustworthy; in the mean time, I will barely say, that whenever you desire confidence you have only to intimate it." A long desultory conversation ensued, chiefly respecting our south-western country, of which he appeared to have formed a just estimate, remarking it was "a treasure worth cherishing;" at taking leave, I observed to him, "well, Sir, having fatigued you with my prattle, I now propose to visit an old friend whom I have not seen for several years, I know you are twain in politics, but I hope there is no disagreement between you, which might render the renewal of my acquaintance with him indecorous to my superior officer;" he asked me if it was "Lamb," meaning Colonel Lamb, I replied in the negative, and named Colonel Burr. "Little Burr," said he, "Oh no, we have always been opposed in politics but always on good terms, we sat out in the practice of the law at the same time, and took opposite political directions, Burr beckoned me to follow him, and I advised him to come with me; we could not agree, but I fancy he now begins to think he was wrong and I was right." What an instructive lesson followed; from the active command of an army, believed to be as firmly entailed on the country, as the present surreptitious establishment of President Madison, we beheld General Hamilton reduced to the ranks of private life, and Colonel Burr elevated to the second place in the government. We then parted, I visited my friend, and the next day I received the following note, in consequence of which I prepared the annexed report, with the references, and I regret they should be too voluminous for insertion in these memoirs, as they contain much interesting information, respecting the interior of the United States.

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"*New York, Aug. 3d*, 1799.

"General Hamilton presents his compliments to General Wilkinson, and sends him at foot, heads for conversation which it is proposed to have; in order to call the attention of General Wilkinson to the general points; most of them have no doubt been topics of communication with the war department, but the freedom and particularity of conversation, will yield additional light and lead perhaps to a correct system, for the management of our western affairs in their various relations.

"OBJECTS.

"1st.—The disposition of our western inhabitants towards the United States and foreign powers.

"2d.—The disposition of the Indians in the same aspects.

"3d.—The disposition of the Spaniards in our vicinity; their strength in number and fortifications.

"4th.—The best expedients for correcting and controlling hostile tendencies in any or all these quarters, including

"5th.—The best defensive disposition of the western army, embracing the country of Tennessee and the north and western lakes, and having an eye to economy and discipline.

"6th.—The best mode (in the event of a rupture with Spain) of attacking the two Floridas; the troops, artillery, &c. requisite.

"7th.—The best plan for supplying the western army with provisions, transportation of forage, &c.

"8th.—The best arrangement of command, so as to unite facility of communication with the sea board, and the proper combination of all the parts, under the general commanding the western army."

"*New York, Sept. 4th*, 1799.

"Sir,

"I have the honour to submit to your consideration, a rough delineation of the maritime coast of the United

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States, and those parts of the interior of our country, which lie contiguous to the dominions of Great Britain and of Spain, as far north as the "Saut de St. Marie;" with the intention to exhibit to you at one view, the military posts occupied at this time by the several powers, and such as have been heretofore occupied and abandoned by our troops; to which I have added projections of other posts, recommended to our occupancy by sound policy; with this memoir you will also receive sundry documents, marked from 1 to 9, to which I shall find it necessary to have reference.

"In the exposition of the opinions and facts which I am about to render to you, I shall avail myself of the latitude you have allowed me, and banishing reserve will repose on your liberality for indulgence to incidental errors, and a candid interpretation of my views. Should my language appear either confident or imperative, I pray you to impute it to my desire to avoid prolixity, on a subject necessarily complex, and to acquit me of any indecorous propensity.

"When we survey the geographical position, investigate the local circumstances, and cast an eye to the agricultural improvements of the United States; the extent and the direction of the magnificent waters of the St. Lawrence and Mississippi, will not escape the attention of the intelligent, nor fail to excite the solicitudes of every sound American breast, for our future relations with the countries which thus embrace our interior frontier.

"Those immense rivers together with the infinity of their tributary streams, traverse almost every variety of climate, circumscribe our most valuable domains, embrace our whole interior population, and open avenues to the heart of our country, through which (in the present state of national supineness) we are liable to be successfully attacked by an inconsiderable force.

"An attempt to dispossess a respectable enemy, once in possession of our western or northern frontier, will be found expensive beyond calculation, difficult in the ex-

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treme and at best of doubtful issue; for while he may derive powerful aid from the unconquerable animosities of the savages, and the versatility of our own errattics, we shall be exposed to the solid obstructions and impediments, which arise from the distance of our resources and the difficulties of the route; to wait for events, will put it out of our power to guard against them, we should therefore anticipate probabilities at least, and determine to erect substantial barriers, against those dangerous portals which open the way directly to our most vulnerable parts. To this end we should augment our force on the Mississippi and the lakes, we should condense that which is now there, and occupy the most critical and commanding passes by durable works judiciously constructed.

"We at present hold several useless military stations on the north-western frontier, merely to awe, to conciliate and to watch the Indians, or to aid the transport of public stores in their progress to posts more remote. Such are Oswego, Presqu' isle, Fort Fayette, Fort Washington, Fort Wayne, and Fort Knox, these should be broken up and the troops incorporated, for by such fritterings, we destroy the usefulness of both officer and soldier, and expose ourselves always to be beaten in detail; should the discontents and the clamours of our transmontane settlers be offered in opposition to this proposition, I answer, that while we command the house, we shall be able to govern the household, and therefore the hostility of the Indians within our cordon, who are dependent on us for even the implements of war, cannot eventuate in any thing serious; and as to those posts which protect the transport of the public property, they are embosomed in strong settlements, which can certainly extend the same security to the national interests, as to those of individuals; it is therefore presumed that suitable agents in charge of the public property, will suffice for every object of safety and utility at such points.

"The notes attached to the garrisons enumerated in the proposed disposition No. 1, will exhibit, in brief, the

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motives which have directed the distribution, and particular stations of the troops therein referred to; but as I deem it highly necessary, strong works should be erected near the head of the straits, which lead from Lake Huron and from Lake Erie, it is proper I should assign my reasons for this opinion.

"It is presumed the British government will never again attempt to try the strength of our country on the Atlantic quarter, by an invasion from the northward; but it is possible, that a state of things may occur, to invite a re-possession, and even the extension of their former occupancies to the northward and westward; in such case she must commence her operations from Montreal, and may approach us by the direct route of Cataraqui, or by what is called the back route of Grand river and French river, into Lake Huron, or by both at the same time.

"The site which I recommend for a post at the bottom of Lake Erie, was pointed out to me by Macniff, formerly an engineer in the British service, who represented the ground to be well adapted to fortification, with the advantage of a good harbour and safe anchorage; which is not I understand to be found elsewhere in that neighbourhood; he added, that immediately anterior to Mr. Jay's treaty, Lord Dorchester had determined to erect a fortification on that spot,* which I am informed, will overlook Fort Erie and command the mouth of the strait; in case of hostilities it will leave no harbour for the vessels of the enemy, on Lake Erie in that vicinity, and at the same time will afford protection to our own; it will form a second barrier, and preserve the communication with Pennsylvania; and it will oppose additional obstacles to the advance of an enemy, by the Cataraqui and Lake Ontario; considered in this view, merely to the defence of the country, I conceive the subject worthy of examination; but viewed irrelatively to military purposes, it will not I believe be found undeserving of attention.

* Black Rock.

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For at the present time, the want of a road within our own limits, and a place of deposit near Lake Erie, obliges us to carry our stores and merchandise *public* and *private*, through the British dominions from Newark to Chippeway creek by land, and from the last place to Fort Erie in batteaux, which involves much delay and expense, and exposes our citizens to undue constraints and impositions. Old Fort Schlosser, erected anterior to the revolution and long since in a state of decay, was occupied under my orders in 1797; but the rapidity of the current of that point, forbidding the approach of vessels of burthen, and the ascent of the stream being found difficult to batteaux, the small garrison was withdrawn. These difficulties and disadvantages will all be removed, by the establishment proposed at the head of the strait, as the ground from thence to Niagara, is I am assured susceptible of a good road.

"If in our course we examine the position of Presqu' isle, it will be found, that it can have no controul over the navigation of Lake Erie; the present work is injudiciously posted, and consists merely of blockhouses connected by ranges of pickets. The site presents no critical spot for occupancy, the surface towards the country being a plain. Six and a half feet water only can be carried into the harbour. The settlements around it are considerable, and are progressing rapidly. It cannot be possessed by an enemy before the posts in advance are carried, and, on an exigency, in twelve days notice four thousand men may be assembled there with arms, from the state of Pennsylvania, under these circumstances, I have recommended the removal of the garrison.

"From this point, passing Detroit, we will proceed to the head of the strait leading from Lake Huron, where a post, in case of hostility with Great Britain, will be found indispensable, to cut off the communication to and from that lake, with the British settlements below. The nature of the ground and the narrowness of the pass, will enable us to do this effectually, and by such an establishment we guard against a coup de main by French river,

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which is very practicable in birch canoes. No. 2 covers a particular sketch of the spot* to be occupied, taken by me in 1797, and this post becomes the more indispensable, because Detroit, although proper for a place of arms, and of general depôt, to keep the Indians in check and to cover the settlements in the vicinity, does not command the strait, which, opposite to the fort, is a mile wide and the main channel running close under the British shore. Whenever it may be found expedient to shut out the British from Lake Superior, a post must be established at the Saut de St. Marie,† which may be conveniently done from Mackinac, in vessels drawing seven feet water, or by batteaux and birch canoes.

"As this chain of posts may effectually exclude all foreign intercourse (from the northward) with our citizens and our savages, which we are not disposed to permit; as it may effectually bar all communication between Canada and Louisiana, at our will; and cannot be forced but by a regular attack, which, with *tolerable vigilance* in the government, we shall always be able to anticipate with superior force. I consider the positions well adapted, and the force assigned, in our present relations with Great Britain, competent to every object of national security ;‡ *it is, however, my decided opinion, that the height which looks into the present works of Michilimackinac should be occupied by a small but strong regular work, and*

* It is a fact, that no attention was paid to this place until the year 1813, in consequence of which and the loss of Michilimackinac, the British held the Indians living on the waters of Lakes Huron, Michigan and Superior at their devotion.

† To this proposition no respect has been paid to this day, although I have urged it again and again, and a post there would give us power to controul the North West Company and to lock up the Chippaways in Lake Superior; yet we can spend hundreds of thousands in Mediterranean speculations, in foreign intercourses and military sinecures.

‡ And yet with a transcript of this memoir in the war department, from the year 1802, not a single step was taken on this recommendation; and with a pre-determination to make war, Mr. President Madison contrived to sacrifice this important post (Michilimackinac) to the enemy's puny garrison of Fort St. Joseph.

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the garrison transferred to it. This precaution with proper endowments, will enable 250 men to defend the place, against any force which can be brought against it, such are the obstacles in the approach to it, the difficulty of finding subsistence there, and the shortness of the season for operations; combined to these preparations we must have a navy for Lake Erie, to bear some proportion to that of the enemy.

"In this place perhaps it may be most proper to call your attention to the state of our ordnance at the several frontier posts. The return under cover No. 3, will exhibit our whole artillery, with their appurtenances, at every post except Mackinac and Niagara; and in No. 4, you have a brief abstract of the cannon and howitzers at each post, to which I have annexed an estimate of the additional pieces, indispensable to the safety of our fortifications and the honour of our arms; on this subject it would be presumptuous in me to address you in detail, as your peculiar intimacy with this branch of service, will best enable you to form the proper conclusions; it may however be proper for me to inform you, that although I have no return from Mackinac, I believe the heaviest metal there, are brass 6 pounders and 5½ inch howitzers, look, Sir, at the endowment of Fort Lernault, (at Detroit) a work of some regularity, and you will find our field artillery sadly misapplied. It may be material also to add, that shot and shells of any diameter and in any quantity, can be had from the furnaces on the Monongahela, well executed under the direction of Major Craig of Pittsburgh, for less than 6 cents per pound. The mass which you will find reported on the Mississippi, was cast there in the spring of 1798 by my orders. On this subject I have written, urged, and entreated again and again, and for fear it should be forgotten, I send you under cover No. 5, the transcript of a requisition made in February or March, 1798, which has not been attended to in any respect. The artillery for the lakes, may I presume be most promptly and economically transported from this place, by the Mohawk river and Fort Schuyler in the proper season, and that for the Mississippi in the present

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moment, may with facility and very light expense, be safely sent forward by the city of New Orleans; with submission I will ask, should this moment be lost?

"The quantum and disposition of our force on the Mississippi and the southern frontier, are subjects which in the existing state of things, have claim to prompt deliberation and decisive action; the present calm in that quarter may prove a deceitful one, and if the storm should take us unprepared, sad scenes may ensue. The handful of men now on that station, would make but feeble resistance, even against the enthusiastic yeomanry of Louisiana, once put in motion. It appears rational and necessary that we should determine, either to defend the country or to abandon it; in the first case the means should be correspondent, and in the last case the troops now there should be withdrawn; for in the present state of hands, the game on our part may soon become a desperate one. The imbecility of the Spanish government on the Mississippi, is as manifest as the ardour of the gallant Louisianians is obvious. A single individual of hardy enterprize, presenting himself with directorial credentials, and hoisting the national standard at New Orleans, might depose the Spanish administration in one hour, and have the population of the country at his disposal for any chivalrous enterprize. Under such circumstances, will it be indecorous should I express my apprehensions, that we repose in false security, and that if we are not seasonably aroused, the dismemberment of the union may be put to hazard?

"Whoever consults the passions and interests of the human breast, and is acquainted with the geography of the country, will discover that the nation which holds the arbitrary controul of the navigation of the Mississippi, must eventually direct the politics of the western Americans; and it is equally obvious to all, who are acquainted with the habits and relative interests of the citizens, and the Indians of the United States, that the latter can never cease to be enemies of the former, and will continue ever ready to strike for vengeance when opportunity may fa-

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vour. The Indians who inhabit the tract of country bounded by the Tombigbee on the east, the Tennessee on the north, the Mississippi on the west, and the Mexican gulf on the south, can muster at least 4500 fighting men; I speak from good information. We will suppose this force armed against us, and 1000 regular troops and 500 chasseurs posted at the Walnut hills (the first spot below the Chickasaw bluffs, which is not inundated during the floods of the river) with ten stout gallies bearing 12 and 24 pounders, well built and well manned. At a point so remote, with the impediments which intervene, the casualties to which we shall be subject, the delays which are unavoidable, and the disaffection we may have to encounter among our own people, whose population is so much scattered; who can calculate the time, the toil, the blood and treasure, which may be found necessary, to drive the usurpers out of the national territory?—Or if the power in possession be hardy and enterprizing, who can ascertain the practicability of the attempt? In my own judgment the event would at best be problematical, because the resources of the invader would be more convenient, and his intercourses more prompt and facile than our own could be.* Before we dismiss the subject, it may be necessary to take into view, that we dare not move out of the Ohio, until we have built a river navy of decided superiority; for it may be received as a truth, that an expedition after four day's sail down the Mississippi, must succeed, surrender, or perish; as we can find no retreat for an army through deep, difficult, extensive, and trackless wilds; for instance, an army driven on shore near the river St. Francis, with an enemy in front, will find itself at least four hundred miles removed from succour, and without transport must fall a prey to hostile savages, or starve. Reverting to the question of abandonment or defence, which has been suggested for sake of argument and elucidation, let us contemplate the unmea-

* The present state of our population has wholly changed the circumstances of the western country in that quarter.

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sured range of the Mississippi, let us view its countless tributary waters, which bathe the most extensive tract of luxuriant soil in the universe; let us reflect that the most valuable portion of this soil is ours of right, and that on the maintenance of this right must depend the national union: under such well founded reflections and the impressions consequent, I flatter myself we shall not hesitate, and that a determination may ensue, no longer to hazard such precious and important interests; for the safety, the subordination, and prosperity of our western possessions, the most cheap and conclusive plan would be the capture of New Orleans; but as this step is at present unwarrantable, we must turn our thoughts to the defensive protection of those settlements; and in this view it will naturally occur, as a general principle, that the means to be opposed must bear a due proportion, to the force which may possibly be employed against us.—But in the present state of things, I deem three regiments of infantry, three companies of artillery, two troops of cavalry, and our two gallies, competent to the defence of the country, against any force which could have been brought into action from Louisiana, when I left that province in June last, provided we receive a seasonable supply of artillery and ordnance stores.

"The particular dispositions which I should prefer for this force, under the circumstances in which I left the country, may be briefly comprised in the following details, viz. a subaltern's command at Fort Pickering (say Chickasaw bluffs,) as a "*locum tenens*," to preserve our exclusive intercourse with the Chickasaw Indians, and for their accommodation; a garrison at Fort Adams, competent to command the pass of the river, and to protract a siege for three months; and to this service I consider 500 infantry and two companies of artillery adequate, the works being finished, and properly armed and endowed. From Fort Adams along the line of national demarcation, at the critical passes, I propose a chain of small posts, to prevent foreign intrigues with our Indians, and to arrest

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any desultory movements which might be attempted by our left, and towards our rear. The garrisons of these posts must be calculated to repel the attacks of small arms, and to retire without loss before the approach of cannon. With my main body I would select a healthy position, to cover our settlements, and co-operate with Fort Adams should it be necessary; and to enable me to give battle to an invading force, or to deny it at my discretion. In this situation I would make soldiers and wait events.

"Having thus, Sir, run over our whole frontier from Canada to East Florida, permit me to call your attention to the sources, from whence we are to derive the force requisite to carry the propositions into effect, which I have the honour to offer to your consideration.

"The regimental returns No. 6, are calculated to expose to you the paucity and painful derangement of those corps.

"The battalion of artillery, necessarily acting in detachments, we find deficient seventy privates, (more than one-fourth of the establishment); we perceive also one captain deficient, one subaltern absent, and another about to resign his commission.

"The first regiment we find scattered from one extremtiy of the nation to the other; we find two companies mustered to the same officer (Captain Tinsley), and six companies furnishing 232 privates only, instead of 360, and it is painful to remark, that in this number consists the strength of the regiment; we find also four captains and four subalterns only present with these six companies, which leaves two captains and eight subalterns to be accounted for; and we behold a deficiency of four lieutenants and two surgeon's mates to complete this corps.

"The second regiment is *more* compact, yet it is also *much dispersed;* we perceive a great deficiency in the ranks of this corps likewise, eight companies furnishing 301 privates in place of 480, the establishment; we find four captains and sixteen subalterns absent, and one lieutenant and two surgeon's mates wanting to complete.

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"Of the third regiment we find five companies on the Mississippi, and one in the state of Tennessee, of the last I have no return; the five companies return only 216 privates instead of 300, and we find in this corps also, a great dispersion of the officers, the surgeon and a mate absent, and six lieutenants and one mate wanting to complete.

"The fourth regiment was taken from my command, by the secretary of war, Doctor M'Henry, in 1797, and I have no return of it.

"To complete the three first regiments to the establishment, the summary annexed to the regimental returns exhibits a deficiency of eleven lieutenants, five surgeon's mates, thirty cadets, three sergeant majors, five quarter-master sergeants, five senior musicians, sixty sergeants, fifty-one corporals, ten drummers, sixteen fifers, and one thousand and fifty-one privates; and eighteen captains and forty-four lieutenants are reported absent.

"This great deficiency of nearly three-fifths of the establishment, is an afflicting circumstance, but the derangement and dispersion of the corps, and the separation of the men that are effective from the officers, and the officers from the men, tear up the fundamental principles of military institutions; they extinguish the pride of corps, that powerfully operative impulse—they prevent emulation—they perpetuate ignorance—they produce insubordination and *indiscipline*, and they destroy responsibility, without which all multitudes become mobs, and an army the worst of all.

"It is irksome to retrace lost ground; it is difficult to combat, successfully, the prejudices of the ignorant and indolent; it is sometimes odious even to correct abuses, and it is always laborious to extract order out of confusion.—But I, and all within the sphere of my command, look up to you, Sir, in full confidence, for such radical reform as may rescue the profession from disgrace, and the army from utter ruin. We languish to behold inno-

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vation and presumption* yield to principles and subordination; we wish to see rightful prerogatives and just distinctions maintained, against partial innovations and capricious whims; and we thirst for the restoration of responsibility throughout the various grades. To the accomplishment of these desirable objects, we deem it important, that an immediate organization of the companies ensue, that the officers be ordered to join without delay, and that they be not hereafter separated from their men, but by permission of the commanding general; that the regiments be incorporated when practicable, and when impracticable, that the parts be approximated as nearly as the interests of the service may permit; that the field officers be attached to, and act with their several corps, and that in the gradations of rank, and the relations of duty, no authority may interfere between a superior and an inferior.

"In the present situation of the troops under consideration, I find some difficulty in devising a plan for their

* Antecedent to this period, Doctor M'Henry, then secretary of war, had introduced into the service anomalies, such as were since matured by General Armstrong, and still prevail in the war department, which destroyed every thing like subordination and responsibility, and concentered supreme power in the head of the department. This gentleman ruined the service, but made himself very ridiculous; like General Armstrong, he would write a military book, and as *Jomini* was not written at that time, he fell on Cuthbertson's Regulations for a Battalion, written about the year 1760, when the British infantry formed in three ranks, and the Doctor with the aid of this light essayed a system of regulations for the infantry of the United States; but not knowing that we formed in two ranks, and confounding the colonel with the commander in chief, and the regimental non-commissioned staff with the general staff, he commenced such a system of incongruity as made him ridiculous in the eyes of the youngest subaltern. Luckily for the character of the government, he sent me—but unluckily for his own, he also sent my subordinates—several transcripts of his performance for our opinions, which without the violation of gravity or delicacy, I turned into such ridicule, as soon exposed to him the absurdity of his imposture, and prevented the intrusion of a second chapter on my attention.

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incorporation, and in bringing the several garrisons to the posts proposed for them; but to delay the corrective, will be to foster the disease which menaces our dissolution, and with great objects before us, we must step over small impediments.

"With due deference then, and pursuant to the ideas before expressed, I shall propose that the first regiment and two companies of artillery, be assigned to the posts of the lakes, and the garrison of Massac on the Ohio; and that the second, third and fourth regiments be ordered to the Mississippi.

"Should this proposition be adopted, it seems advisable, that the whole of the infantry in Georgia be transferred to some one of our new posts, and the officers be ordered to your head quarters for instructions. By this arrangement, we save the expense of double transport, prevent delay, and avail ourselves of the services of men who are seasoned to an unhealthy climate.

"The troops now at Oswego and Niagara, with Whistler's company from Fort Wayne, will complete the garrison proposed for the second place, to one major, one captain, four lieutenants, one surgeon's mate, four sergeants, five corporals, one drummer, one fifer, two artificers, and seventy-two privates; and will leave us one sergeant, two corporals, one drummer, one fifer, two artificers, and sixteen privates of artillery, with three fifers and one corporal of infantry to be carried forward to Detroit, and transferred to the first regiment, and Captain Thompson's artillery; to which place also, the residue of the garrison of Fort Wayne should be ordered, and that post left in charge of the Indian agent who is posted there. We shall then find at Detroit, of artillery, one captain, one lieutenant, three sergeants, four corporals, two fifers, one drummer, two artificers, and twenty matrosses, and of the infantry of the first regiment one lieutenant-colonel, one major, one captain, one lieutenant, one surgeon, eight sergeants, twelve corporals, three fifers, one drummer, and thirty-six privates; to which I propose to add, by transfer from the men of the second

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regiment now there, in exchange for the same number of the first regiment on the Mississippi, six sergeants, seven corporals, two drummers, two fifers, and seventy-five privates, which will give us a total of nine sergeants, twelve corporals, three drummers, five fifers, and one hundred and eleven privates of infantry; and these I would form into two companies and officer completely; and of the supernumerary non-commissioned officers, drums and fifes, one sergeant, one corporal, one drum and one fife, may be assigned to Captain Prior, who wants them, and the residue may be employed in the recruiting service. Thompson's artillery should be completed without delay, and in the mean time, a detachment sent to relieve Porter at Mackinac, who with his company should be ordered to Massac, via Chicago and the Illinois river, a safe, easy and expeditious route during spring or autumn, in peroques or birch canoes; and for the sake of responsibility and economy, the detachment of Thompson's company, now at Massac, should be transferred to Porter. The following will then be found the present actual strength of the first regiment, and the force of those garrisons respectively.

POSTS.	Species of troops.	Lt. Cols.	Majors.	Captains.	Subalterns.	Surgeons.	Mates.	Sergeants.	Corporals.	Drummers.	Fifers.	Artificers.	Privates & Matrosses.	Total n. c. rank & file.	Companies.
Niagara	Artillery		1		1		1	1	1			2	16	21	Thompson's
	Infantry			1				3	4	1	1		56	65	Whistler's
Detroit	Artillery			1	1			3	4	1	2	2	20	32	Thompson's
	Infantry	1	1	1	1	1		9	12	3	5		111	139	Pitt's
Mackinac	Artillery				1			1	1	1			13	17	Thompson's
	Infantry				1			4	4	1	1		32	42	Prior's
Massac	Artillery			1	1	1		3	4	1	1	7	26	42	Porter's
	Infantry			1				3	4	1	1		49	58	Pasteur's

"A comparison of this return, with the garrisons proposed for the posts it comprehends, will exhibit a great deficiency of men and officers; to repair these defects, the due complement of officers for the five companies, should be ordered immediately to join, and the residue should be actively employed in the recruiting service;

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and it is presumed that fifteen officers, which will be left for that duty, may with industry complete the regiments by the next spring, before which period we have little to apprehend, as the frost will soon lock up the lakes.

"Of the second regiment, we have eight companies returned, which give us 301 privates; these should be organised into six companies, completely officered, and the residue of the gentlemen in commission, the surplus non-commissioned officers, drums and fifes, should be ordered to the recruiting service; the detachments of this corps, may with facility, with expedition and economy, reach the destination proposed for it, by the Miami of the Lakes, the Wabash and the Ohio rivers; and should the proposition be adopted, orders ought to be immediately issued for the movement, as the autumnal floods are at hand, and it is important to the health of the troops destined to the south, that they should reach their stations in autumn.

"The third returns five weak companies in the Mississippi territory, and we are assured of one company in the state of Tennessee; the last should be ordered to join the main body; the whole should be officered to the establishment, and the recruiting service should be pushed by the supernumeraries; the colonel, *who has never seen his regiment in seven year's service*, should be ordered to join it, and the first major, *who has been more than three years absent*, should be ordered to do duty either with his corps or at a recruiting rendezvous.

"With respect to the fourth regiment, stationed in the state of Tennessee, I have no report on which to found details; but as it appears that peace and content have been restored in that quarter, the objects of the command there have ceased, and the corps may with facility, and without expense, be readily transferred to the Mississippi. The fragments of an artillery company, and a troop of dragoons attached to this regiment, may also be ordered by the same route, to the most feeble, exposed and succourless frontier of the nation; but special care should be had in the removal of this corps, that the due

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complement of officers march with it. Under the cover No. 7, you will find, respectfully submitted, a plan for the organization of the four old regiments, which by the late augmentation and change of establishment, have been entirely disorganised. In the distribution of the officers, I have consulted talents, qualifications and merits, as far as my knowledge extends; and when this has failed me, I have cast lots. I beg to call your attention to my preference of captains, as I have seen most of them tried, and have made the selection with a view to combat.

"In examining the ordnance return for Fort Wayne, you will perceive a handsome stock of small arms, and a small quantity of powder. Should the garrison be removed, it will become a matter worthy consideration, whether these articles should be carried to Detroit, or forwarded to the Mississippi; the expense will be nothing in either case, and the reflection which should determine us, will rest on the greater or less safety and utility of those weapons at the respective posts. To account to you for the small quantity of fixed ammunition, at the barrier on the Mississippi, I must observe, that we sat down in the woods, and had our buildings to form from the stump, which prevented the completion of a laboratory until within a few days of my departure; and I may add (with great truth) and I do it with sensible pain, that I have not an officer there who knows how to drive a fuse, or charge a shell. This is a point of too much magnitude to escape your attention, and I trust some officers of skill and experience may be forthwith ordered to that quarter, and among them a field officer is indispensable; ——— is now senior on that station, and he is not only ignorant, but at intervals his conduct approaches to insanity. It appears essential, that some person should be employed for that department, capable of instructing our officers in the inferior branches of the mathematics, to comprehend spherical trigonometry and the doctrine of projectiles, and also to teach them the use of the necessary instruments; as I know not an individual in service there who can take either altitude or distance,

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or who understands the proper application of Hadley's quadrant. On this subject it is necessary to add, that books and instruments should be furnished, as I have never received either from the public. A theodolite, a sextant, a circumferenter with chain, and three sets of pocket instruments, would, I apprehend, suffice.

"Under the cover, No. 8, I take leave to offer you a variety of information relative to the interior communications of our country, from Michilimackinac to *La Prairie des Chiens*, by the west shore of Lake Michigan, Green Bay, Fox river, and the Ouisconson, and by the east coast of the same lake, to the river St. Joseph, and Chicago; and from thence across into the Illinois river, and by that stream into the Mississippi, and down to Cahokia; and also the route from Cahokia up the Mississippi to *La Prairie des Chiens*, where we have annually the most numerous assemblage of Indians, and the most considerable mart for Indian traffic within our limits, or within one thousand miles of the same point. Under the same cover, you will find reports touching the Tombigbee, and the country intervening from thence, to our lowest establishment on the Mississippi, which will be accompanied by a general (though incorrect) map of the country, and a sea coast chart from New Orleans to Mobile, with a pretty exact plan of the Mobile river up to Fort Stoddert, and a sketch of Lake Michigan, for which I must refer you to Lieutenant Heton.

"Under No. 9, I take the liberty to offer you certain transcripts from my orderly book, which taken with my order of the 22d of May, 1797, before submitted to you, have constituted standing rules of service, and therefore it may be necessary for the commanding general to change, modify, or sanction them, to prevent the quibbles and controversies of the impatient and litigious.

"The moral, physical and political principles, properties and relations of the several subjects which are glanced at in this detail, will be examined in another report, which I shall digest at my leisure, as it can have no influence on any immediate operation.

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"I am conscious, Sir, that you will find in these sheets much useless prattle; but in balancing between precision and prolixity, I decided that it was safer to trespass on your time, than to suppress information, however frivolous. In matters of speculation, your intelligence will correct my errors, but in matters of fact you may repose confidently on this report, which is most respectfully submitted to you,

"By, Sir,

"Your obliged and faithful servant,

(Signed) "JA. WILKINSON.

"*Major-general Hamilton.*"

After perusing this memoir, General Hamilton expressed his approbation, but informed me he should submit it to General Washington's consideration, for, although the General had declined command, until there should be occasion for him to take the field, yet he consulted him on all general arrangements, and that as this reference would require a fortnight, I might employ the interval as I thought proper; I proposed to visit Boston to review the scenes of my military noviciate, and he charged me with the letter for President Adams, which will be found in page 157 of the next volume. On my return to New York, I was informed that General Washington had approved my disposition of the troops, for the north and south-western frontier, and measures were immediately commenced, to carry them into execution; but they were arrested by the unexpected accommodation of our differences with France, and the sudden reduction of the army.

For these blessings the United States were indebted to the pacific disposition, and disinterested patriotism of Doctor George Logan, for which he deserved a civic crown, but under the delusions of the times, was rewarded with reprobation and abuse. It must be fresh in every man's recollection, that in the course of the awful revolution which stained the face of Europe with blood,

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the independent policy and political prejudices of the United States, opposed to the imperious fanaticism and despotic spirit of revolutionary France, had, in the years 1798–9, brought the two countries into a species of piratical conflict, which menaced a speedy, open, and vindictive war. To prevent the dreadful visitation, if in his power, this gentleman, in the enjoyment of ease and affluence, with a rising family, and a consort whose personal accomplishments, domestic virtues, and superior understanding, render her not only an ornament to her sex, but I can say, without flattery, do honour to the human race, determined to forego these blessings and departed from Stenton near Philadelphia, the venerable seat of his ancestors, and visited Paris at his private expense: this expenditure required a sacrifice, and he sold a part of his estate, to fulfil a duty to humanity and his country. On his arrival at the French metropolis, the good offices of the Batavian minister, Mr. Schimelpenninck procured him an introduction to the director Merlin, and enabled him to place before that influential man, in its true light, the real character of the quarrel between the two countries. A very frank and independent conversation produced such explanations, as could not be refuted nor resisted, and which were followed by the raising of the unrighteous and oppressive embargo on American vessels, which had menaced the fortunes of so many good men; assurances were also given formally to Mr. Murray, our minister at the Batavian republic, that the French directory was ready to treat with commissioners of the United States, for the adjustment of their controversies; a negociation ensued, which however interrupted by diplomatic artifice or passion, was finally successful; and thus by the humane interposition of an individual, the war which had already arrived at naval conflict, was arrested; and the boundless prosperity of this nation was preserved and promoted. How many thousands are there who owe their fortunes, how many more their lives, to this agency of Doctor George Logan? Yet, how few remember it!!!

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Moved by the same principles of patriotism, beneficence and christianity, Doctor Logan made an attempt to prevent the late war with the British nation, for which purpose he again crossed the ocean and visited Great Britain; there he found in the Duke of Bedford, the Marquis of Lansdown, Sir John Sinclair, baronet, and Mr. Coke,* the distinguished and highly independent member for the county of Norfolk, and other eminent public characters, the most friendly dispositions towards the United States, and the strongest desire for peace;—during his stay he addressed a letter to, and had an interview with the Marquis Wellesley, then secretary of state for foreign affairs on the subject, which appeared to him satisfactory; but the dominant spirit of the British cabinet, and mutual jealousies and irritations, forbid that conciliatory course, which might possibly have promoted and preserved a good understanding between the two nations. If this personal mission failed of effect, it was not the fault of the agent, who deserved the grateful thanks of his country for the undertaking; but the FEDERALISTS had abused the Doctor for his officious, but successful interference with France; so on this occasion, downright good DEMOCRATS BY PROFESSION ridiculed his visit to Great Britain as the impulse of an enthusiastic mind: such is the intolerance of faction and the vehemence of interested partisans in all cases, which tend to affect their political views and designs. But, I would to God we had an hundred influential citizens of the same spirit and principle scattered over the United States, for it is by the cultivation of such a spirit and such principles, that the happy constitution and government of our country, can be rescued from the fangs, not of a political party, but of an interested and ambitious cabal, and brought back to its original purity; and it is by such means and such men,

* The accomplished proprietor and occupant of the princely mansion and estate of Holkam, a gentleman as celebrated for his hospitality and private virtues as for his pure and consistent line of politics. He is said to have more than once declined the honours of the peerage, preferring his high standing as a commoner.

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the peace, propriety and happiness of the republic will be preserved.

The following letter will demonstrate the principles of the writer, and the motives of Doctor Logan's last visit to Europe.

"*St. James's Place, No. 37,*
April 28th, 1810.

"My Lord,

"I arrived in the last British packet from New York, and had the pleasure of bringing with me despatches from the President of the United States to our minister in London, of the most conciliatory nature, calculated to settle the unhappy difference which has too long subsisted between Great Britain and the United States, equally injurious to both.

"Since my being in London, I find an opinion prevails with some gentlemen of high standing in the councils of their country, that the President and the people of the United States have a strong attachment to France. Having been a member of the senate of the United States for six years, and for more than fifteen years been honoured with the friendship of Mr. Madison, I know this charge to be without foundation. As I consider it of some importance to have your mind perfectly satisfied on this point, with the permission of your Lordship, I will wait on you to-morrow at one o'clock, to have a short conversation with you on the subject.

"Sensible of the importance of your time, devoted to the service of your country, I should not wish to intrude on it for a moment; but the tremendous power of Bonaparte in Europe, his activity and future prospects of domination, renders it absolutely necessary that both our governments, in their present negotiation, should resort to a spirit of confidence, justice and forbearance, and not to jealousy and petty acts of irritation. Mr. Pinkney, our minister, has the full confidence of the President,

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and is himself well disposed to promote a happy reconciliation.

"Accept assurances of my respect.

"GEO. LOGAN.

"*The most noble the Marquis Wellesley.*"

"*Stenton, March 20th*, 1815.

"Dear Sir,

"It is with the highest gratification I congratulate you on the return of peace between Great Britain and the United States. You well know the anxiety of my mind, when in London, to prevent the direful conflict, by which both nations have lost many valuable citizens, and expended millions of money, without acquiring one single advantage. But this calamitous event is not attributable to the people of either nation, but to the infatuated councils of both. This is evidenced by the universal joy pervading every class of citizens, even before the terms of peace were known.

"Hostilities having ceased, it is probable a treaty of friendship and commerce will be contemplated. Should this desirable event take place, it is to be hoped the negotiations will not be tarnished by temporary expedients, or mere local considerations, injurious to the general interest, but that a spirit of magnanimity will prevail, as the soundest policy, to insure the peace and future prosperity of both countries.

"Accept assurances of my esteem and friendship.

"GEO. LOGAN.

"*Sir John Sinclair.*"

"*Edinburgh, July 20th*, 1815.

"My dear Sir,

"I had the pleasure of receiving yours. I rejoice exceedingly at the restoration of peace between the two

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countries. It was neither your fault nor mine, that a war, so unfortunate for both countries, was not prevented. I am now at Edinburgh, at a distance from all my papers, and can only request your acceptance of the trifles herewith inclosed, together with two recipes for preventing the mildew, which would be invaluable, if they are found to answer. CHAP. XI.

"Excuse a few hasty lines, and believe me with much esteem and regard,

"Yours,

"JOHN SINCLAIR.

"*Dr. George Logan.*"

The splendid abilities of General Hamilton were admitted on all hands, but his political sentiments and public services, became a subject of controversy between the adverse parties, which divided the community; on one hand he was eulogised as the consummate statesman, and the sound patriot; whilst on the other, he was charged with predilections to royalty, and political attachments hostile to republican institutions; his works best bespeak his transcendant talents, and General Washington bore testimony to his probity and patriotism. The entire confidence with which this gentleman treated me, licensed the most unreserved frankness, and one day in a desultory conversation, I inquired of him whether he knew he was considered by many, as the advocate of royal governments, and the decided friend of Great Britain? He replied, that those with whom he was associated in politics, and who understood him, would acquit him of these predelections; but that those who were of the opposite party, had he understood, accused him of both; he said, that the part he took in the federal convention, had he supposed given rise to the first imputation, and his opposition to the public sympathies, for revolutionary France, to the last; that in the convention, he had la-

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boured to promote a system of government, which he believed best calculated to preserve the integrity of the union; for, that, from his reading and experience, he could not bring himself to believe a great empire could be protected by a thatched roof, against the storms and tempest to which all states were liable; and that, therefore, he was for vesting Congress with a qualified controul over the state governments; to guard against caprice and contumacy, and to secure obedience to the national will. That his adversaries were inconsistent, inasmuch as they allowed him to possess discernment and knowledge, and yet, charged him with a desire to introduce a monarchy, which every person in the least acquainted with the genius and temper of the people of the United States, must know was absurd. That under the existing constitution, he could readily conceive a possible case, which might lead to a subversion of the general government, that was a coalition, between Virginia and Massachusetts, to resist the measures of Congress; for, said he, it would be difficult to find a remedy for such an evil, originating with those powerful states. With respect to the other point, he said, it was not from an unfriendly disposition to the French people, that he had opposed the public sympathies, but it was to prevent the honest zeal of our own people, from hurrying them headlong into the arms of a nation, engaged in a contest, the end of which, no one could discern; that his sole object, was to preserve the independence of the United States, by saving them from political engagements, which might prove dangerous to their future peace, and prosperity; and that in regard to Great Britain, although the policy he had advocated might indirectly favour her European views, it had been the effect of circumstances, in which his dispositions had no share; for that at the very time, his heart bled under the sense of the wrongs, offered by Great Britain to the United States, and he had no doubt the haughty spirit of that nation, would involve us in a war with her in less than seven years; for which, it was

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his opinion, we should then begin to prepare; and it is a fact, that all his measures and deliberations took that direction. CHAP. XI.

It is not in my power to do justice to General Hamilton's turn of thought, or mode of expression; but the preceding is to the best of my recollection, the substance of his observations, and I offer them to the world at their value, not doubting myself, that his motives were pure, and that his policy saved this country from heavy calamities. How capricious then is the destiny of public men! how adverse the fortunes of individuals, who laboured together in a common cause, for the maintenance of principles of government, which they equally approved! I allude specifically to Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, and I must be pardoned for the comparison, which is here employed, merely as a caution to my countrymen, in the choice of their servants, not hastily to condemn, nor blindly approve.

Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Madison assisted by Mr. Jay, wrote the Federalist in concert, which is conclusive as to their union of sentiment and entire confidence at that time, and if the united testimony of Judge Yates* and of General Hamilton† deserves credit, Mr. Madison's aristocratical disposition in the federal convention, cannot be denied; and if such respectable proofs should be deemed insufficient, surely his administration of the government, for the last five years, would furnish abundant evidence of his disposition to usurpation and abuse of power, and what is equally fatal to a nation, his tame submission to their commission by others; and yet we have seen these political brethren, the one depressed and the other exalted, by the very same party, for their political tenets; so much for that integrity, which spurns concealment, and that hypocrisy, which studies dissimulation.

The reader will excuse me for leading him from this *exposé* to one of a similar character, written more than

* See new series of American Law Journal, pages 563. 570.

† See sixth edition of the Olive Branch, pages 78—9.

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twelve years after; during which period the moral and physical capacities of the western country have undergone an incredible change, and the improvements have transcended all example; during this eventful epoch not only the navigation of the Mississippi, but both banks of that matchless river, with a boundless extent of territory, have, by the tumults of the world and the caprices of fortune, been acquired by the United States, whether for their remote happiness is a question which I have always doubted.

After two years of persecution, which will be fully explained in the next volume of these memoirs, my sword which had been divorced, for the first time during a life spent in the military service of my country, was restored to me, and I was warned to prepare for command on the Mississippi. The naval despotism of Great Britain displayed in her blockades, her searches, impressments, insults of our flag, murders of our citizens, and contempt of our remonstrances, had long before given just cause of war, and the declaration would probably have been made, but for the outrageous wrongs and indignities heaped upon us, at the same time, by Bonaparte; which by distracting the national counsels blunted the edge of our resentments against the British government, and disunited the public sentiment. War, always a certain calamity, and of uncertain issue, depended on a casting vote, but it could not be sustained with effect, without the very general and hearty approbation of the people; neither was the country in a state of preparation to measure swords and purses, with a nation powerful in arms, and fruitful in resources; nor is the government of these states (*I thank Almighty God for it*) framed for the purposes of war. The rightful and necessary publicity of republican deliberations, and the dilatory proceedings of popular assemblies, forbid the prompt, secret, sudden blow, which constitutes the life and soul of war; and is congenial with despotisms only; the sagacious Jefferson carefully surveyed these obstacles, and wisely and virtuously preferred negociation, regardless of public clamour. His successor pursued the same sound policy, until he found it ne-

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cessary ostensibly to yield up his own judgment to secure his re-election, and while he made war with one hand, courted negociation with the other. But lest the public acts of Great Britain should not bear him out, he sought by the agency of a traitor, whose perfidy dishonoured the appeal and whose motives discredited his revelations, to irritate, inflame, and prepare the public mind for his purpose. This allusion will recal to the reader the intrigues of the venal apostate Henry, for whose secret information, President Madison disgraced his station and abused the public trust, by the commutation of fifty thousand dollars; some future historian will render ample justice to this transaction.

The morning preceding this terrible explosion, the secretary of war called on me at my quarters, and inquired whether I was prepared to march? I asked for my instructions, and he observed they could be formed in ten minutes; some conversation ensued touching the necessity of despatch, and a war being mentioned, I expressed my belief, that the event was not at hand; "Then you do not expect war," said he, "by G—d it will burst upon us like a clap of thunder;" I replied, "will you venture to go to war in so unprepared a condition?" he answered, "we shall never be prepared before war is declared, Congress will not go into the expense of preparation;" "and will you," said I, "take upon you the responsibility of making war in our present circumstances? if you do, remember that I say, you will soon be obliged to retire from office." He appeared exceedingly animated, and I cannot but smile at the vanity of ministerial calculations when I recollect the time, place, and circumstances of the interview. The Presidential exposition of Sir James Craig's intrigues, in New England, to the House of Representatives the next day, explained the mysterious exclamation of the war secretary.

In the temper of the times, when men's passions were roused by the extraordinary pretensions of the British government, and its reiterated aggressions, the exposition of an intrigue, the design of which, obviously had

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been to blow the coals of discontent, and fan the flame of disunion among the states, could not fail to excite the warm indignation of every honest patriot, and raise the angry passions above the key of temperate discussion; but I conceive another purpose was involved in the disclosure of Henry, designed to indulge the resentments of a little malicious heart.

It will be remembered by every body that a small number of distinguished influential characters in Massachusetts, had arrayed themselves against the ascendant political sect. In the heat of party zeal those gentlemen forgot their several duties, they had openly encouraged an opposition to the laws of the union, and in a manner identified themselves with the worst class of pecuniary speculators and smugglers; the intemperate warmth and acrimony, for which they condemned their adversaries, they themselves plunged into; and under a government less pure in its forms, they had proceeded far enough to incur the penalties of treason. But although none of those prominent characters were criminated by Henry, it was expected that the very direction of his corrupt intrigues would implicate them, tarnish the patriotism of New England, impair her political influence, and subject to suspicions of a traitorous predilection, the descendants of those very men, who struck out that spark of liberty which illumined our path to independence; the government itself acted as a faction. Conduct thus destitute of magnanimity, was not well adapted to conciliation, but well calculated to irritate and increase existing discontents, and instead of strengthening the executive arm, produced a contrary effect; generous, honest minds revolt against excesses of every kind, and the indignation excited by aggravated imputations may lead to their commission; for revenge is inherent, and the diabolical passion which has beguiled many an honest man, can be successfully opposed by the christian religion only; Condé went to the Bastile devoted to his prince, but came out his vindictive foe. Hannibal confessed his country merited the vengeance of Rome.

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It must not be understood that I approve the conduct of the Massachusetts faction, which opposed a combination to the operations of the general government, which countenanced the violation of the laws, or tended directly to destroy the federal union, and subvert the government; such conduct was not only ungenerous and undutiful, but it was indeed most ungrateful to their southern brethren, who stood forth in their cause, when they were unable to resist the arm of the oppressor, it was parricidal. Yet, I cannot consent that the follies or vices or intrigues of a few persons, should degrade a whole sister state, in the eyes of the confederation, and I have too much confidence in the yeomanry of New England, not to believe they are among the last to abandon the union, or surrender the right of self-government, to accept a foreign yoke.

Be this as it may, I perceived in the resort to Henry's documents a strong propensity to war, and being ordered to the most feeble, defenceless, and important point of the union, I considered it my duty, to call the attention of the executive to its protection, by as strong an appeal to his fears, his patriotism, and his duty, as my understanding could conceive; respect for professional reputation, the love of country, and the following letter from the secretary of war, enjoined this task upon me; and the reader will determine how far I succeeded in the attempt, and what were the effects produced by my premonitions.

"*War Department*, 13*th March*, 1812.

"Sir,

"In the moment permitted and allotted to the instructions relative to your command, it occurs to me that your ideas of the defensive operations which circumstances may require, may be extremely useful in forming them; more especially on the subject of the force, to be derived from the district called New Feliciana, and the time for, and terms on which, it may be called forth.

"Respectfully, your obedient servant,

"W. EUSTIS.

"*Brigadier-general Wilkinson.*"

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"*Washington, March 28th*, 1812.

"Sir,

"My reflections respecting our south-western frontier and the defence of New Orleans, accompany this letter; and it is my earnest desire, that my orders and instructions may follow, with as little delay as your convenience may permit. In the mean time, I beg leave, with the utmost deference, to entreat your attention to certain considerations, which emanate from the general principles of service, and apply to the command on the Mississippi.

"In military service, to establish a fair responsibility, an officer in trust for the nation, should be trusted without reserve, because half-confidence may produce harm, but can effect no good. It is consonant with reason and infallible in practice, that he who is responsible for all should govern and direct all, without the interposition or interference of superior authority. Subordination and discipline depend essentially, on the authority of the chief over his subordinates; and therefore that authority should be strengthened by the utmost display of executive sanctions. The slightest indication of distrust, wounds the character of the general, excites insubordination, and encourages disobedience, which is the precursor of anarchy.

"Independent of the requisites, embraced by the estimate herewith presented, it is absolutely necessary land and water transport should be provided for baggage, camp equipage, stores, and portable magazines of every species. Covered barges of fifteen and twenty tons burthen are most appropriate for water carriage, pack horses, wagons and horse carts are best adapted to land transport. It is submitted for consideration, whether an attempt should not be made to procure mules and horses from the Spanish provinces. Draft oxen are preferable for general operations, because of the facility with which they are subsisted, but for alert movements they are too slow. Forty wagons with chains and yokes for three

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pair of oxen each, should be sent from Pennsylvania or Kentucky.

"Armourers are indispensable to the preservation of the arms, to have them regularly handled, oiled and wiped; without this attention, the humidity of the climate will damage them in the course of six months; the public loss, in this respect has been very considerable on the Ohio and Mississippi.

"The executive authority should be delegated under suitable instructions, for the organisation and equipment of the yeomanry, of the state of Louisiana and the Mississippi territory.

"The general staff should be appointed without delay, and as the officer in trust must repose entire confidence in those who compose it, in respect to their fitness, zeal, integrity, and personal dispositions, it is a rule of service, founded in obvious motives, that he should be consulted in the selection.

"The most prompt attention should be given to the medical staff, the medicine, hospital stores, equipments, and surgical instruments.

"Our place of arms, grand laboratory and magazines should be established at the cantonment near Washington, Mississippi, and buildings should be forthwith erected for the purpose. New Orleans is too much exposed for those establishments, and the deterioration of every thing liable to be effected by the humidity of the atmosphere, is rapid and unavoidable at that city.

"Private business, preparatory to my departure hence, obliges me to absent myself, until this day week, when I shall be ready to receive your commands.

"With perfect respect,

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"JAS. WILKINSON.

"*The Hon. William Eustis,*
Secretary of War."

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CHAP. XI.

Thoughts, Military and Political, concerning the Ultramontane States and Territories, and the importance of the Mississippi River.—By General Wilkinson.

"This interesting subject comprehends a vast range; to render justice to it, would require time, talents and a volume; but my engagements limit me to a few sheets, and this is the best excuse I can offer, for the abrupt manner in which I shall treat it.

"To form an estimate of the wealth, strength and importance, the territory under consideration is destined to exhibit, at no distant period, we need only cast our eyes on the map, where an immense region is presented to us, traversed by the father of rivers and his thousand tributary streams, whose ramifications extend throughout more than two-thirds of the national domain; but how much is the estimate enhanced, when to extent we combine soil and climate and productions? soil luxuriant and inexhaustible; climate equally adapted to the vigour of youth and the infirmities of age; products comprehending the treasures taken from the bowels of the earth, and every comfort which grows on its surface, from the precious metals to hardy iron, from wheat and hemp to sugar and cotton, from the apple to the orange.

"It cannot be denied that the mouth of the Mississippi forms the most important pass on the globe; since it is the single outlet for the products of the wide spread country, watered by its numerous branches, and, in effect, locks up the western world. Nor will it be contradicted, by those who understand the subject, that New Orleans under the fostering hand of a free government, must become the first commercial city in the universe.

"The vital importance of this pass, cannot be too deeply impressed on the government of the United States; because the possession of it, interests profoundly the integrity of the union. Speculative policy therefore should have nothing to do with it, but the utmost energies of the nation should be called forth to defend and maintain the

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occupancy; for it must be obvious to all, who admit the doctrine, that man is swayed by his interests, and that allegiance and protection are reciprocal, that the power which commands the Mississippi, must ultimately controul the politics of the people, who depend on its navigation for the sale of the fruits of their labours.

"The territory of Orleans, which comprehends the several mouths of the Mississippi, is exposed to attack from two quarters only; by maritime invasion, or from what are called the internal Mexican provinces;* yet, however remote, exposed and destitute of the natural means† of defence, it may by seasonable precautions and the judicious application of the resources of the government, be defended against any force of reasonable proportion. But should a naval power of enterprise and capacity, anticipate the necessary measures of defence, and get possession of New Orleans, it is my belief, the integrity of the union will be jeopardised. For I should be content to hazard my reputation on the event, that ten thousand veteran troops, seasoned to the climate of the West Indies, or the same number of disciplined blacks, under able commanders, in co-operation with a superior flotilla, which it is presumed a naval depot at New Orleans must always secure, would defend the island on which that city stands against any force we could send down the Mississippi; because it cannot be approached from the interior but by one route, and that a continued defile of more than one hundred miles, formed by the river on one hand and the cypress swamps on the other.

"The line of maritime invasion to which New Orleans is exposed, extends from Lake Pontchartrain on the east to the river Tesche on the west, a distance of about eighty leagues, intersected by several bays, inlets and rivers, which furnish avenues of approach to the metropolis. Of these approaches I consider Lake Pontchartrain, the River aux Bœuf, the Mississippi, Lake Bara-

* Las provincias internas. † A numerous free population.

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taria, La Fourche, and the river Tesche, the most convenient. But fortunately, the flatness of the coast is unfavourable every where to the debarkation of troops, and the bays and inlets being all obstructed by shoals or bars, no landing can be effected except by the Mississippi, unless in launches covered by gun boats; and such attempts may be baffled by the superiority of our flotilla, seasonably and judiciously posted, and supported by stationary batteries.

"Nevertheless, an invading force must possess great advantages over any system of defence that can be devised, which are to be counteracted by judicious dispositions, incessant vigilance, active exertions and determined valour. Commanding the coast, with an extensive line to manœuvre upon, an invader can shut up our flotilla, conceal his movements, make his feint where he pleases, and carry the real attack at his discretion.

"For example, he may make strong demonstrations of attack on the side of Lake Pontchartrain, send his transports to the westward, and make a descent by the Fourche, which would bring him into the Mississippi twenty leagues above New Orleans; or he may threaten the mouths of the Mississippi, force a passage into Lake Pontchartrain, and take a choice of landings in the vicinity of the city; or he may sail into Lake Maurepas, debark without opposition, and by a short march get possession of the left bank of the Mississippi, ten or twelve leagues above New Orleans; or he may ascend the Amit river, land at Galvestown, and by a march of a few miles, take possession of the left bank of the river one hundred miles above New Orleans.

"The River aux Bœufs is a few leagues southward of Lake Pontchartrain, and lies behind the Chandelier islands, which I am informed furnish a safe roadstead for ships of the line. About six leagues up this river, which gives a free navigation of ten or twelve feet water, there is a good landing, and from thence an open road of eight leagues over firm ground to New Orleans, but the bar at its mouth gives four feet water only.

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"A descent by Lake Barataria would be the most difficult, because the approach is by a long narrow creek, connected with the Mississippi by a canal for high water, which communicates with the river on the west side, about a league above the city; yet as this route is practicable, it must be guarded.

"The river Tesche leads directly to the Attacapas and Apalousa settlements, and is connected with the Mississippi by the Chafalia and Placquemine outlets, and also with the Fourche by a lateral branch; it must therefore be watched and defended.

"But the Mississippi is the broad route of approach, and our greatest safety there is derived from the bar at its mouth, which shoals the navigation to thirteen or fourteen feet water. This security will not, however, avail us any thing, unless the bar is defended by armed vessels and floating batteries posted within, competent to destroy any force which may attempt to enter. At this point and on these means, we must at present rely for the defence of the river, as the forts which have been erected, are mere scarecrows, incompetent to obstruct the passage of a sloop of war, and therefore no means should be neglected within the power of the government, to strengthen and endow them suitably.

"It is a fair conclusion, that a maritime invader would press his attack, by one or more of the openings to which I have had reference, because being destitute of land transport, he must depend on water communication for his provisions and stores, as much as Sir William Howe did when he took possession of Philadelphia; and it is well known if Commodore Hazlewood had not abandoned the back channel into the Schuylkill, the evacuation of Mud island would not have taken place, and the failure of subsistence would have compelled the British army to have fallen back to Wilmington.

"It is then humbly conceived, that the earliest attention of the government should be given, to the obstruction of those avenues of approach—that the requisite force should be assembled near Natchez and Baton

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Rouge as speedily as possible—that the yeomanry of the country should be organized, armed, equipped and arrayed for co-operation without delay,—and that such dispositions should be made of the whole, as may best preserve the health of the troops, most effectually secure a prompt co-operation with our flotilla, and accelerate such combinations of our forces as events may render necessary.

"But should hostilities be delayed, and the Spaniards continue to occupy Pensacola and Mobile, it is very possible the British, under the pretext of aiding their ally, may make their first landing at those places, and having established their place of arms and general depot of stores and provisions, they may, after their troops have been refreshed and prepared for the enterprize, carry an attack against New Orleans, when time and circumstances are most favourable. It is questionable whether an attempt would be made to march across the country, and get possession of Natchez or Baton Rouge. It seems improbable such an attempt should be made, immediately after the invaders land, because of the defect of transport, yet as it is possible, we should be prepared for it. But it is certain that the British occupancy of Pensacola and Mobile, would produce the most mischievous effects on the minds of the Indians; for whoever believes that the aborigines of this country can be attached to the citizens of it, deceives himself; inasmuch as sympathy is unnatural, *where the wrongs have been all on one side.*— Under such circumstances, our settlements on the waters of the Mobile and Pascagola, would be in jeopardy, and to protect them would require a distinct force, as we should not dare to withdraw the covering army from New Orleans, while the enemy commanding the coast, might, by a sudden movement, make a successful attack on that city during its absence.

"In this state of things, with the conviction on our minds, that the commencement of war with Great Britain, will be the signal for hostilities to Spain, will not the United States be justified by the laws of nature and

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the custom of nations, by self preservation and a just ground of fear, to anticipate the British in the possession of Mobile and Pensacola. In such case it should follow as a necessary consequence, that measures be adopted for the defence of the harbours* of those posts, which might be accomplished at a moderate expense.

"Let us recur to the defence of New Orleans. It is a sound presumption, that a maritime invader will make a direct attack against that city, by one or more of the avenues heretofore enumerated, and that understanding our present feeble unprepared condition, he will give us as little time as possible to strengthen ourselves. What then should be our primary measures of defence? Every essential to the naval or land service to be drawn from the Atlantic coast, should be expedited to the Mississippi—the troops destined to the service in that department, should be hurried forward to the general rendezvous, at Washington, Mississippi territory, or Baton Rouge—the officer intrusted with the command should ascertain every vulnerable point of the coast, and post the necessary troops and batteries for their defence—the general staff should be immediately appointed, hastened to the points of rendezvous, and commence the vigorous discharge of their several functions—all absentees should be peremptorily ordered to join, and the levies should be marched by companies or battalions as fast as they are levied.—Simultaneous with these arrangements, telegraphic communications should be established from the pass of Christiana to Fort St. John, within five miles of New Orleans, and from the Balize to St. Philip.

"This work will not be found difficult, because the visual range between the several stations, is over a flat, naked surface,† exposed to the sea breeze. Despatches for the residue of the route, from Fort St. Philip to the

* Mobile bay was defended by the post the author erected at the point.

† Higher up the Mississippi, the reflection from its banks, and the exhalations from its surface, sensibly affect vision, even with the aid of telescopes.

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head quarters of the army, must be accelerated by fast rowing barges and relays of horses, by which means also communications are to be made from Lake Barataria, and the mouths of Aux Bœufs, La Fourche and La Tesche.

"A critical examination being essential to the ultimate dispositions of our means of defence, it would be unprofitable to enter into details at this time; but, it is presumed, it may not be useless or improper, pending arrangements of such complication and extent, in some parts unusual in practice and in others difficult of execution, to exhibit without delay a schedule of the armament and attirail, requisite to the protection of the important object of these reflections.

"To defend New Orleans and the mouth of the Mississippi, against a dominant naval force and six thousand veteran troops, rank and file, from the West India station, the following force is deemed indispensable.

"*Four of the heaviest national vessels*, which by starting water, discharging cannon and stores, striking yards and topmasts, and the application of other means, may be dragged over the bar into the river.

"*Forty gun boats*, to mount 18 and 24 pounders.

"*Six boats to be propelled by steam*, to mount an 8 inch howitzer bow and stern, and to be constructed to transport four hundred men each and a month's provisions.

"*Four stout radeaux*, to mount ten twenty-four pounders each.

"*Ten thousand regular troops*, non-commissioned officers and privates of the following composition.

"294 *Dragoons mounted.*

"264 *Light artillery.*

"304 *Heavy do.*

"9,138 *Infantry.*

"1,500 *Militia of the Mississippi territory*, mounted gun men and dragoons.

"2,000 *Militia of the state of Louisiana*, artillery and infantry; both corps to be organized, armed, arrayed and held in readiness for service.

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"The armed vessels may in the first instance, be employed to reconnoitre the coast and keep a look out, but the important service for which they are intended, is the defence of the mouths of the Mississippi, and the pass into Lake Pontchartrain.

"The gun boats are destined to the same service, and also for the defence of the inlets of Aux Bœufs, Barataria, La Fourche and Tesche.

"The steam boats are considered most important vehicles of transport, as well as vessels of offence, for alert movements and the rapid transferrence of men, artillery, stores and provisions, up and down the river or on the lakes; in winds, calms or currents, the advantages to be derived from them are incalculable; and as war craft they may on smooth water, by the lucky flight of a single shell, destroy a vessel of war; preserving at the same time their distance beyond the portice of the heaviest cannon. Without these boats, the obstructions from currents, calms and adverse winds, must forbid all calculations of punctuality in military movements on the Mississippi and the lakes. For exemplification, we will suppose a disposable force posted at Baton Rouge, when advice is received that the enemy have forced the mouths of the Mississippi, and are approaching the capital—without steam boats the troops are obliged to embark in row boats, and may be headed by strong winds, which will force them to land, or so impede their movement, in spite of every exertion, as either to prevent their seasonable arrival at the point to be succoured, or to carry the men into action exhausted by fatigue, and disordered by bad weather. The winds prevail from the south-westward on the Mississippi, with heavy rains (*communibus annis*) during the latter part of autumn, the whole winter and early part of spring, frequently for several days successively. I recollect in November, 1806, I was six days and nights descending the river from Fort Adams to New Orleans, in a light eight-oared barge; and in March, 1810, I was five days and nights making the same trip, in a twenty-oared barge, without

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a load, and worked by a select crew. The service of steam boats will be equally important in another case; high, healthy, good positions for encampments may be found on the borders of Lake Pontchartrain, opposite the Bayou St. John; but the lake being eighteen miles wide, it cannot be crossed with safety in open boats, and shallops may be detained by calms or adverse winds for many days successively; of course, no calculation can be made on the punctual co-operation of a body of troops, for the defence of New Orleans, from such position; and therefore it would be too hazardous to be resorted to, however important to the health of the corps, unless we can avail ourselves of the agency of these boats; which, in spite of wind and weather, would save the exposition of the men, and carry them into action alert and unfatigued; and they may also be most beneficially employed in the transport of the sick, stores and baggage.

"Under the conduct of skippers and crews permanently attached to them, these boats and their machinery might be kept in good order and always ready for prompt movements. It is presumable the patentees would have no objection to suffer the use of them in the public service; indeed the public safety assures the right to the government.

"The invading force has been estimated at *six thousand veteran troops;* for although in our present unprepared condition, *two thousand men* would suffice to force the mouth of the river, and carry the city with facility, yet it is presumed no regular invasion will be undertaken with a smaller force. Ten thousand men are required for the defence of Louisiana, because that number of undisciplined troops, with scarcely an officer who ever looked an enemy in the face, whatever may be their personal valour, would not be an overmatch for six thousand veterans, trained in fire, and led by officers who have been frequently engaged during a long, active and bloody war. Strong considerations might be produced to justify my demand for this armament; for whilst we have a wide spread country to protect, the enemy may select his point

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of attack; and commanding the coast, he may make his feint in one direction, and carry his whole force against another; whilst our force must be detached and divided from Mobile to La Tesche, to cover every avenue and defend every pass; and therefore we should possess the best means to accelerate the movement of reinforcements, or effect the condensation of our corps when and wherever necessary.

"The composition of the troops is adapted to the service, and the dragoons and light artillery will find on the banks of the Mississippi, the very same duties they may be required to perform on the banks of the St. Lawrence. But should the enemy by an extraordinary effort of enterprize, or their intrigues with the Spaniards, bring us to action on the pine plains of Florida, or the prairies of Texas, Attacapas, or Apalousa, then these arms would become all important.

"The execution of this plan will cost much labour and much treasure, and so will any effectual one which can be devised. But if the country be worth saving, it is our solemn duty to protect it, and to withhold the necessary means of defence on the grounds of economy, would be unwise and unjust in the extreme.

"It may be expected that the dragoons and artillery horses will occasion an insupportable expense; but this idea is delusive if suitable measures be seasonably adopted; because Indian corn may be delivered at Baton Rouge at 33 cents per bushel, and hay at ten dollars per ton, and a horse may be kept in high order in that country, on ninety bushels of corn and one and a half ton of hay per annum, which will cost forty-five dollars; from whence it results, that 630 horses, including those for the dragoons, the artillery men and field pieces, may be found for $28,350 per annum.

"The two brigades of light artillery required, at fifteen men per gun, the usual allowance in the field, to work the piece and take charge of the horses, limbers and caissons, will not man two pieces per thousand infantry, which are too few by at least one per regiment;

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and the heavy artillery, after the stationary batteries are manned, will furnish but a small detachment for the guns of the park.

"With this force, and the arms, ordnance, stores, equipments, tools, implements and transport comprehended in the estimate hereunto annexed, furnished in due season, I should consider the defence of New Orleans secured against a maritime invasion, in the strength to which I have made reference. It must however be understood, that for the defence of the bays of Pensacola and Mobile, thirty additional gun boats, four heavy floating batteries, and two stout frigates would be necessary.

"But while preparing for the defence of New Orleans, we should not be inattentive to the Mexican provinces; for it is a fact derived from good authority, that Great Britain has appointed three commissioners, to co-operate with the same number from the Spanish regency, expressly to effect a reconciliation, and restore the former relations between the provinces and the parent state. Whatever may be the effect of these negociations, it is the obvious policy of Great Britain, to acquire some direct or indirect controul over the people of South America, and more particularly those of the Mexican provinces; and it appears to be our interest and our policy, to take measures to counteract those views, as it may be fairly inferred, that the Mexicans must become our enemies or our friends; enemies should the British intrigues prevail, and the ancient government be re-established—friends should the natives be enabled to assert and establish their independence.

"In this state of things, it might be presumptuous in a subordinate agent of the government, to obtrude his ideas on a subject of such complication and magnitude; yet it is too manifest to escape notice, that some concert should be effected with the native chiefs of the internal provinces, and that this government should be prepared to furnish them succours of small arms, light artillery, ammunition, equipments and field equipage, with experienced officers to instruct them, and select corps from

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the different branches of service, as nuclei for the revolutionists to rally around, and skeletons for them to form by. It would seem that no time should be lost in carrying this project into execution, and preparatory thereto, a couple of light armed vessels should explore the coast of the gulf west of the Mississippi to Grand river, and ascertain the entrance into El Espirito Santo bay, where La Salle landed. I have been informed four or five fathoms water may be carried into that bay, and that it is completely land-locked. The position is certainly the most convenient for maritime intercourse with the inhabitants of the province of Texas, to be found east of Grand river; it receives the river St. Antonio or Medina, which is navigable for batteaux eighteen leagues to the town of La Bahia, situate on the right bank of the same, twenty-five leagues from St. Antonio the capital of Texas, to the neighbourhood of which, navigation may be found for perogues, during the high waters of the country.

"The critical situation of the Mexican provinces, adds much weight to the importance of our possession of the Mississippi; for if we lose it, we shall be cut off from all means of concert with those provinces, and the practicability of succouring them; and is our present force in that quarter, competent to the defence of New Orleans? the question will be most satisfactorily resolved, by referring to the means of defence and their disposition. But it is a *familiar idea*, that should we lose New Orleans, we have but *to will the re-capture and it follows*. Those who make this calculation have not had the opportunity to examine military operations, on a line of a thousand or fifteen hundred miles in any direction—much less from a healthy to an insalubrious climate. It seems to be understood by those who are thus sanguine, that the force necessary to the expulsion of an invader from New Orleans, may be drawn from the yeomanry of the states and territories bordering on the Mississippi, and the waters which fall into that river. But is the expectation well founded? Let us inquire. Were I called on to describe those people, I would say they were brave, hardy, pa-

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triotic, and actively engaged in the pursuits of fortune, and that they might be classed under the heads of opulence, mediocrity, and indigence. Will the rich man, or he who can enjoy comfort with his family, abandon the ease and sweets of domestic life, take arms and march a thousand or fifteen hundred miles, to meet an enemy in a sickly climate? Such expectations are neither reasonable nor natural, and therefore should not be relied on. But can a poor man, on whose labour his wife and children depend for daily support, make this sacrifice? It is impossible! the best feelings of the heart revolt against the idea. The effects of distant dangers on the human mind are evanescent, they are neither seen nor felt, and are therefore disregarded. But let the firesides of the same men be menaced, and then indeed they will fly to arms *en masse*. Here then we meet with an insuperable obstacle at the very threshold of our inquiry, and to the reasoning on which it is grounded, we might add the experience* of 1803, when a fruitless attempt was made to engage volunteers provisionally, for the very purpose of expelling the Spaniards, when it was expected they would attempt to hold New Orleans, in contempt of our contract with France. But for fear we should make a false estimate of the zeal and patriotism of our fellow citizens, by doubting their readiness to abandon their wives and children, and fly to arms to seek war in a distant land, we will dismiss this difficulty and admit, that more volunteers will offer their services than may be required for the expedition, that they shall be all clothed, armed, equipt, found in every essential, and ready to march at a word. Let us inquire at what season the embarkation ought to take place, and we shall find it must be either in autumn or spring; as the frosts of winter and the low waters of summer, present insuperable obstructions to the

* A more striking evidence of the difficulty of procuring freemen to march 1200 or 1500 miles to battle, may be found in the late war, when the finger of Heaven and the courage of a handful of men, saved the emporium of the west from the ravages of the enemy, in spite of the *criminal* neglect of President Madison and his ministers.

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descent of the western rivers. But should the embarkation take place in October or November, the troops will reach the lower country after the winter rains have commenced, and the soft light soil of the country is saturated to its surface; without barracks, towns, villages, or cities sufficient to shelter the men from the weather, they will find themselves suddenly transferred from comfortable habitations to a wet bed, under a canvas roof; colds, fevers, and fluxes will soon ensue, and the natural effects will be, disaffection, discontent, desertion and discomfiture. If the embarkation be made in spring, the voyage will be pleasant, but the troops will arrive just in season for fevers and bilious affections, more dangerous to a body of raw levies, (men and officers equally ignorant of police) than the sword of the enemy; these propositions are not chimerical, nor are the deductions strained; they rest on twenty years experience, and are justified by strict observation, made during many voyages on the Mississippi. But as we have not yet reached the enemy, and must not be baffled without his opposition, let us suppose the climate perfectly salubrious, and an army descending the Mississippi in high health and spirits, and completely equipt for action. It will be necessary to look out for the enemy; for we must not drive headlong into action, unless we intend merely to make a flourish and beat a retreat, or blindfold rush on destruction. A prudent general will approach his antagonist with caution, he will reconnoitre his position and defences, and as far as is practicable, ascertain his numbers. It is then, and not before, that he can make his dispositions, and conscientiously lead to battle, men whose lives have been placed in his hands.

"An enemy once in possession of New Orleans, it is presumed, will employ every means in his power to preserve the acquisition. He may ascend the Mississippi between four and five hundred miles, (that is, above the settlements of Mississippi territory) station his floating batteries of every description, from armed barges to sloops of war, and defend them by fortifications on both

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banks of the river; he may change his position as often as he finds it necessary, and having slaves to erect his batteries and perform every laborious service, his troops will be cherished and preserved for the higher duties of their profession.

"It will be agreed that whenever we meet the enemy, should he command the strongest river squadron, we must be driven on shore; and as there will be no retreat for an army against the current of the Mississippi, in the face of a superior flotilla, our baggage, stores, and provisions must be lost; should the event take place twenty leagues above the Walnut hills, where the high lands recede many miles from the river, and the Delta is liable to inundation, the catastrophe would be complete and our misfortune incurable. It may be proper in this place to examine the soundness of the preceding remarks, as they relate to the capacity of the invader.

"A dominant naval power, in possession of New Orleans, whose fiat is law, will command many resources, as well for offence as defence; by starting water and discharging cannon, stores and provisions, he may introduce as many sloops of war and light frigates, into the Mississippi, as he may think necessary; he may establish a naval depot at New Orleans, and equip, and arm, and man, as many additional vessels as he may find useful; he may quarter his troops in the most spacious and airy buildings of that city; he may establish his general hospitals on the sea board in salutary positions; he may draw forth slaves to erect fortifications, or he may arm them at his discretion; he may command the Lakes Pontchartrain and Maurepas with light armed vessels, and having thus secured his rear, with the slaves and Indians at his devotion, he may advance with his main body and his flotilla, and make the conquest of the Mississippi territory; he may occupy the critical passes of the river, of which there are several, with his floating defences, and protect them by cross batteries; he may receive all his supplies, in river craft, regularly from his magazines at New Orleans; he may draw his flour from Vera Cruz

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and his fresh beef from the Attacapas and Apalousa; he may procure horses and mules in any number and at prices incredibly low, from the internal provinces of Mexico; (a contract was actually made by the prefect Laussatt, with the captain-general of these provinces, to mount General Victor's dragoons;) he may practise seductive arts to debauch our citizens, and offer an asylum to the adventurous, the discontented, and the desperate; and being in possession of the country, he may protect the settlements in the exercise of self-government, may open a trade for them to the British and Spanish dominions, and furnish a market for every article of domestic consumption.

"A chief of skill, energy, resource, and discretion, in possession of the lower Mississippi, would have all these advantages on his side, and with men and means, he might give them full effect. The object is certainly of sufficient magnitude to make it worthy the severest contest, and the utmost vigilance and exertion of the government; for should the British get the possession, it will be a great means of establishing their influence in the Mexican provinces, where they may find every resource of men, treasure and subsistence.

"But should the invader be content to limit his enterprise to the possession, and the command of the river below, he may take post at Baton Rouge, erect fortifications, and with his flotilla bid us defiance; because his resources will be at hand and ours at two thousand miles distance, following the only channel of communication; or he may fall down below the Bayou Manshac, which insulates New Orleans six months of the year, from whence the only approach to that city is through a defile of more than one hundred miles, formed by the Mississippi and the Cypress swamps, which by simple cross cuts from the river to the swamp, is capable of being disputed at every mile.

"The earliest preparative to a descent against such an enemy, would be the construction of a flotilla; and it here becomes a question, while the enemy has a naval depot

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at New Orleans, with seamen and officers on the spot, and we have to resort to our Atlantic ports, for cannon, naval stores, men and commanders, whether we shall be able to acquire the mastery?

"I have said nothing of a descent over land, because I consider it impracticable to find an army of fifteen thousand men, the smallest number with which we could hazard the expedition, with portable magazines, ordnance, and the necessary attirail, through a wilderness of five or six hundred miles.

"These thoughts have been thrown together in haste, and under almost incessant interruptions; but as far as they relate to the exterior and interior defence of New Orleans, I beg leave to repeat, that they rest on the observation and experience of many years.

"I have not reasoned upon the general effects which may ensue the loss of the emporium of the west, nor have I glanced at *the political or personal consequences* which such an event would infallibly produce, because these things do not appertain to the province of a soldier; but I have considered it my duty to the state and the executive, to point out the dangers by which that emporium is menaced, and, with my best judgment, to indicate the means, by which those dangers may be effectually resisted, and the apprehended evils averted.

"Which is respectfully submitted by

"JAS. WILKINSON.

"*Washington, March 28th*, 1812."

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CHAPTER XII.*

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Remarks on essays of 1799 and 1812, delivered to Major-general Hamilton and President Madison.—Refers the latter to Messrs. Johnson and Clay of Congress.—Orders of the executive.—Correspondence with the secretary of war.—Reflections on the orders received.—General Wilkinson arrives at New Orleans and receives the declaration of war.—State of the district.—Council of war.—Measures of defence adopted.—Mr. William Darby's letter.—Wilkinson receives orders to take Mobile.—Takes a Spanish transport, and removes a guard.—Mobile surrenders by convention the 13th April.—Correspondence with the Spanish commandant.—Convention.—Correspondence with the Spanith governor.—Same with the secretary of war.—General Wilkinson occupies Mobile Point which he afterwards fortifies, now called Fort Bowyer.—Takes possession of the right bank of the Perdido and projects works.—Major Lawrence's gallant defence of Fort Bowyer, and the destruction of the British sloop of war Hermes.—Assistance afforded by Lieutenant Alexis.—General Wilkinson sails for New Orleans.—Receives orders to repair to the northward.—Importance of New Orleans to the western states.—Obstinacy of President Madison in rejecting Wilkinson's plan of defence for that city.—He afterwards regrets having done so.—His anxiety to share the laurels with its gallant defenders.—Remarks on General Wilkinson's instructions.—Fort St. Philip repaired and endowed.—Condition of works at the Balize, English Turn, Petite Coquille, Chef Menteur, &c.—Battery established at Mobile Point.—Forward state of the blockship.—Works and blockship abandoned.—Destruction of arms in the last twenty years attributed to defective regulations.

* The contents of this chapter to "Clay of Congress," were accidentally carried into those of the last chapter.

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*—Conduct of President Madison examined.—Enemy's intentions against New Orleans unveiled by reports from the West Indies and other quarters, and by their movements from Baltimore.—Wilkinson's solicitude on the occasion, and his maltreatment by Messrs. Madison and Armstrong.—He addresses a letter to the secretary of war respecting the papers left in New Orleans.—The subject is treated with marked neglect.—General Jackson's force, and his loss concealed.—*Arms pass Louisville for New Orleans, 6th January, 1815.—*Motives for recording details of events in the Mississippi.—State in which General Jackson found the fortifications.—Effects of the affair at Fort Bowyer.—The enemy's approach discovered the 9th December, 1814.—Anchorage at Ship Island, and movement on the 13th.—Motions of the American flotilla under Lieutenant Jones.—The enemy pursues him.—Comparative strength of the respective armaments.—Heroic resolution, and gallant conduct of Lieutenant Jones and his officers.—Enemy deterred from attacking Petite Coquille by the lesson dealt to them at Mobile Point, and Lieutenant Jones's report.—They proceed by the Bayou Bien Venu.—General Keene arrives on the 22d, with 2000 men, at Villere's plantation.—Reflections on the mal-direction of the enemy's force.—Fault of the enemy in not pushing direct for New Orleans.—General Jackson resolves to advance and attack the enemy.—Collects his force and determines upon a night attack.—Co-operation of Com. Patterson in the schooner South Carolina.—Enemy surprised and thrown into confusion, but do not quit the field.—Reflections on the attack.—The conduct of the troops engaged.—Effects of the affair of the 23d, on the enemy.—General Jackson erects his defences on the narrow part of the plain.—Conduct of Sir Edward Packenham and the British troops.—Consequences of the attack of the 8th January, 1815.—Doctor Flood's letter.—Information received from Lieutenant Jones of the navy.—Dilapidated state of Petite Coquille, and the weakness of its garrison.—By a more judicious disposition of the British army New Or-*

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leans must have fallen, and with it probably General Jackson and his army.—Conduct of the governor, the government, and inhabitants of Louisiana, and of the military commander examined and commented on.—Causes assigned by General Armstrong for Wilkinson's recal from the command at New Orleans.—Reflections thereon.—Review of Wilkinson's conduct and that of the government.—Reflections made on the old army.—An answer to them.—Lieutenants Cobb and Blanvelt dishonoured, and Samuel Helms murdered.—These atrocities sanctioned by President Madison.—Appeal to the country.—Letter of General Washington.

CHAP. XII.

Remarks on the memoirs of 1799 and 1812.

SUBJECTS of a military nature often require previous military experience to form accurate judgments upon them; but the rule is not universal, and I persuade myself that a perusal of the two memoirs contained in the preceding chapter, will afford to every sensible reader the means of determining upon the degree of vigilance, zeal, and foresight which I manifested in the discharge of my duty to my country. But the military reader will be able, by attention to the measures which I recommended, and the time of the recommendation, to perceive, what was done or neglected, by the executive, and the consequences during the war which followed; and the contents of these memoirs will, I trust, bear testimony to the uniformity of my sentiments, and the importance of the topographical information which I supplied. But my solicitude for the safety of New Orleans was alarmed, from the evident apathy with which the executive appeared to view this important place; I therefore determined not to depend altogether on the disposition of the government, and submitted the memoir of March, 1812, to the honourable Mr. Johnson and the honourable Mr. Clay, members of Congress from Kentucky, the interests of whose constituents would, I imagined, induce them to bestow attention on the topics presented to their notice; the former gentleman acknowledged their importance, and seemed to be struck with

Refers the latter to Messrs. Johnson and Clay, of Congress.

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CHAP. XII.

Orders of the executive.

the necessity of prompt attentions to the subject, but I am not apprised whether the last gentleman bestowed any attention on it or not; and as to the President, he contented himself with informing me, through his minister of war, that the *extravagance of the requisition would frighten Congress*, and that I must *make out* with the troops, within the Orleans and Mississippi territories, and on the 9th April he would have despatched me, with the following laconic letter of instructions for my government, in the most critical and remote command within the national limits.

"*War Department, April 9th*, 1812.

"Sir,

"By order of the President, I request you will repair to New Orleans, and take the command of the troops and stations, within the territories of Orleans and the Mississippi.

"With respectful consideration,

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"W. EUSTIS.

"*Brigadier-general Wilkinson.*"

Correspondence with the secretary of war.

But however credulous in my reliance on executive probity, however blindly confident of the liberality and justice of the government, I had served too long to enter upon an important and perilous command under a mere *direction for my journey*, I therefore answered this letter of the secretary's on the 11th, and received his reply on the 15th.

"*Washington, April 11th*, 1812.

"Sir,

"I had the honour yesterday to receive your order to repair to New Orleans, and take command of the troops and stations within the territories of Orleans and the Mississippi. The very general tenor of this order obliges me to submit, for your solution, several proposi-

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tions which appear highly interesting to the public service, and are certainly essential to my government.

"As I have no other motives in making this application, but to promote the executive views and the national interests, to do good and avoid harm, I shall comprise these propositions in as narrow a compass as possible, relying on your candour to receive them as they are intended, and that you will in your answer, treat them with the frankness which the solemn interests of the occasion require.

"1st.—Am I, on entering upon the command at New Orleans, to consider myself authorised to commence such immediate defensive precautions as my judgment may direct, for the protection of the country against invasion, or am I to await further orders?

"2d.—Will you permit me to inquire what force is contemplated for the defence of the country to which I am ordered, by land and by water, of regular troops and auxiliary militia and their composition, of armed vessels and floating batteries, their number and kind?

"3d.—What are to be the respective functions of the commander of the land forces, and the commodore of the flotilla; are they to act independently of each other, or is the senior officer to direct the concert and co-operation of the whole?

"4th.—Shall transport by land and by water, be prepared and held in readiness to meet the exigencies of the service, in whatever direction required?

"5th.—Shall our general depot and place of arms be removed from New Orleans, and established at the cantonment near Washington in the Mississippi territory?

"6th.—May expenditures be made for the repair or improvement of the old fortifications, or the erection of new ones, should they be deemed necessary?

"7th.—Will engineers of capacity and experience be sent to the department? two at least are necessary, whether for field or garrison duty, and I believe there is not one on the station at present.

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"8th.—Will telegraphs be established, barges be furnished, and relay horses be allowed, for the transmission of intelligence?

"9th.—May I be permitted to take possession of Mobile and Pensacola so soon as arrangements can be made for the purpose?

"11th.—What is to be my conduct towards any foreign power, who may take possession of Mobile or Pensacola before a declaration of war?

"12th.—Shall I be justified in driving the country* to prevent provisions or transport from falling into the hands of an enemy?

"13th.—I beg leave to ask whether the yeomanry of the country are to be organised, armed and arrayed for service, and whether I should not be instructed in relation thereto?

"As my duty will oblige me to make various rapid transitions, through savage wilds and settlements of dubious character, my personal safety will require a mounted escort of swordsmen or gunmen, and therefore I will beg leave to take into pay a subaltern command of this description of troops, on such terms as may secure their service, that is, the terms on which the frontier rangers are employed.

"It is a matter of importance to me, that the officers of the general staff, destined to act with me, should be appointed before my departure, that I may prepare them to meet me at New Orleans; and, therefore, you will pardon me for requesting your attention to my memorandum of the 9th instant. I must also claim your promise in favour of Mr. Jonathan Bell, for his nomination to a subaltern's appointment in the 2d, 3d or 7th regiments of infantry, or the old artillery for which his education fits him.

"Should we be involved in war, and the theatre of my command be invaded, will you be pleased to desig-

* Removing cattle, horses and stock of every kind.

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nate the source to which application may be made for the means of procuring intelligence.

"I shall not delay a moment unnecessarily in commencing my route, and flatter myself I shall be able to reach the point of my destination by the 20th of the next month. Whatever may be the destinies of our country, you may rest assured, I shall make the most of the means I may command; and whenever occasion may require it, neither toil, nor peril, nor life, shall be spared on my part, to assert her interests, and her honour.

"With respectful consideration,

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"JA. WILKINSON.

"*The Hon. William Eustis,*
Secretary of War."

"*War Department, April 15th,* 1812.

"Sir,

"In answer to the inquiries contained in your letter of the 11th instant, I am instructed by the President to inform you, that in addition to the regular troops now on the station, and such others as may be raised and ordered to join you, an auxiliary force, *in case of emergency,* may be called out from New Orleans and Mississippi territories, under the volunteer or militia law, as may be found most practicable and convenient. You will be pleased to make such disposition of the troops, and such arrangements respecting the fortifications, arms, ordnance, arsenals, ordnance, military and other stores, as well as of the naval force, as your own judgment may suggest. Moveable ordnance by land and by water, and a disposable force, with occasional or temporary works, appearing from the nature and extent of the country, *preferable to a dependence on the permanent fortifications,* it is considered *inexpedient to bestow on the latter any considerable labour or expense.*

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"In case any extraordinary emergency should arise or information *be received of a meditated attack*, rendering it necessary to enlarge the preparations and to augment the force to a great extent, and there should be sufficient time to receive an answer, *it is desirable that information thereof should be immediately transmitted*; if, on the other hand, you are *threatened with an immediate attack, by a large armament*, to call out the physical force of the territories, and to make a proper disposition and use of the means within your controul, *is all that can be expected.* Possession may be taken of Mobile and Pensacola, in case an arrangement has been, or shall be made with the local authority, for delivering up the possession of the same to the United States, or in the event of an attempt to occupy them by any foreign government.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"W. EUSTIS.

"*Brigadier-general James Wilkinson.*"

Reflections on the orders received.

The reader will observe that my importunity could not extort a manly or decisive reply to my memoir; and the puny powers conceded were shackled with *provisos*, in their nature absurd, inapplicable to the service, and if respected, would, after all my warnings, have infallibly sacrificed New Orleans; in this letter of the 15th from Doctor Eustis, the temporising, timid, calculating, indecisive finger of President Madison is confessed; *moveable batteries in a country where there are no roads, but on the margin of the river, were to be preferred;* "*no considerable labour or expense was to be bestowed on permanent fortifications.*" "*In case of extraordinary emergency, or a meditated attack,*" *the monstrous idea of applying to the city of Washington for instructions is suggested; but, if* "*threatened with an immediate attack,*" *then I was* "*to call out the physical force of the territories;*" *and* "*then*" *to meet an enemy, who was not as*

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stupidly blind as the late invaders, it would have been too late; several thousand stand of small arms had reached Washington, from the factory at Harper's Ferry, before I left that city, but as an economical war department would not afford tarpaulins to cover them, they were exposed to several day's rain, and were as wet as if they had been thrown into the river. I officiously had several of the boxes opened, and recommended that the whole should be dried, oiled and wiped; 1500 or 2000 of the same muskets reached New Orleans from Charleston, South Carolina, *after the declaration of war*, in a fast sailing schooner, employed for the purpose by Major-general Pinckney, but they were damaged.

Damaged arms.

I arrived at New Orleans the 9th July, and met the declaration of war in the following note.

Arrives at New Orleans.

"*War Department, June 19th*, 1812.

"Sir,

"War is declared against Great Britain, you will make such arrangements and dispositions of the means and force subject to your controul, and adopt such *measures* as the knowledge of *this event* may in your *judgment require*.

"I have the honour to be,
"Very respectfully, Sir,
"Your obedient servant,
"W. EUSTIS.

"*Brigadier-general James Wilkinson,*
or officer commanding New Orleans."

It will be seen in this hasty production, that neither my *means*, nor my *force* is extended, but that President Madison in the *manifest perturbation* and *terror produced by his own act*, had found it necessary *indirectly* to cancel the provisoes and restrictions, with which I had been previously shackled; and I determined to take advantage of this *precipitancy*, and turn it to the *safety* of the country, although I afterwards *suffered for it*.

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CHAP. XII

State of the district, and council of war.

On calling for returns, and examining the state of the district, I discovered a frightful destitution of means in every branch of service, except the hospital, and that imbecility and disorder prevailed throughout; so soon as I had clearly ascertained these facts, I convened a council of war, to avail myself of their conjunct deliberations, and the following minutes of their proceedings will present to the citizens of the United States, the actual situation of the military defences of New Orleans, on my arrival there to take the command, in July, 1812.

Minutes of a Council of War, holden at New Orleans, August 4th, 1812.

PRESENT.

"Brigadier-general Wilkinson,
Commodore Shaw, U. S. navy,
Lieutenant-colonel Purdy, 7th regiment infantry.
Major Macrea, artillery,
Major Carmick, marines,
Captain Patterson, U. S. navy,
Captain Blakeley, U. S. navy.
Colonel R. Shaumburgh, D. Q. M. G.
Benjamin Morgan, esq. D. Com. Gen.

"The General having submitted to the council, his correspondence with the secretary of war,* proceeds to offer the following statement, of the present situation of affairs.

"War being declared against Great Britain, the naval superiority of that power enables her to mask her maritime movements, and invade suddenly the state of Louisiana, and the adjacent territory of the Mississippi, directly or indirectly; by attempting to force the mouth of the river or some of the inlets to this city, between the bay of St. Louis on the east, and Beller Isle on the west; or by taking possession of Mobile and Pensacola, as the ally of Spain, and projecting her enterprises from thence,

* See vol. iii. page 336.

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when the season and other circumstances may be most favourable.

"The United States remain at peace with the government of Spain; but a recent communication* from the governor of Pensacola to Governor Claiborne, now submitted to the council, speaks a language too plain to be misunderstood, and too extravagant to be justified. *The American government will not tacitly submit to the unmerited reproaches,* or *quietly yield to the unwarrantable pretensions of any power on earth;* and should *this* Spanish governor adhere to the alternative which he has *dared* to propose, hostilities must immediately ensue, and the points in contest be settled by the sword; for the people of the United States will neither *rescind a right, nor abandon a fellow citizen in any extremity.*

"Thus we find ourselves at open war with one European power, and on the threshold of hostilities with another. The quarter confided to the protection of the army and the flotilla of the Mississippi, is undeniably the most feeble, the most succourless, and, at the same time, the most important within the national limits; and therefore the precaution, vigilance and exertion of those in whom the trust is reposed, should be correspondent. Understanding as the enemy does, the importance of this city and its dependencies, it is a fair presumption, that he will endeavour to make himself master of it; and being well acquainted with the coast, his maritime domination puts it in his power to be prepared for a descent, before he commences his voyage, and it is most probable his arrival will furnish us the earliest certain information of his intentions.

"Should the views of the enemy be carried, in the first instance, towards Pensacola and Mobile, he will discover that a body of barely fifteen hundred men in possession of those places, would produce the most injurious impressions on the minds of the Indians; place the inhabitants of that frontier in jeopardy, and expose the government

* See Appendix, No. VI.

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to an incredible expense, either to protect them or dispossess the enemy; because a single frigate may cut off our water communication to either place, and subject us to land transport, through a desert of two hundred miles; for the subsistence, baggage, ordnance, military stores, and the whole attirail of an army; incident to obstacles and delays, which might involve the most pernicious embarrassments.

"To maintain the national rights, to resist invasion and give protection to this extensive and exposed frontier; supposing every post in our occupancy abandoned, and every man of the line embodied, who is capable of active service, not more than one thousand six hundred men could be arrayed for battle; to this is combined the naval force on this station, consisting of two brigs of sixteen and fourteen guns, ten gun boats, and about one hundred and fifty marines. But in case of emergency, "an auxiliary force may be required from the executive magistrates of this state and the adjacent territory, under the volunteer act of the 6th February, or the militia law of the 11th April, as may be found most practicable and convenient; and possession may be taken of Mobile and Pensacola, in case an arrangement has been, or shall be made, with the local authority, for delivering up the possession of the same to the United States; or in the event of an attempt to occupy them by any foreign government."

"The arms of the troops are reported to be defective, and those in store are either damaged or require cleaning and repairs.

"The men in general are badly clothed, the public is greatly in arrears in that article, and there is no prospect of a prompt supply.

"There is not in store a knapsack to every fifth man, and the troops cannot enter on campaign without them.

"The corps are destitute of transport for operations, offensive or defensive, by land or by water.

"There are no magazines of forage, long or short.

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"The ordnance department lacks transport* for two six pounders alone; the whole stock of cannon powder would not serve our batteries of 24 pounders only, fifteen hours at the most moderate service; and the whole stock of musket powder, including that which is fixed, would not serve a column of four thousand men, with more than seventy-six rounds per man, supposing every pound reported to be good.

"The military stores and implements are greatly deficient, being generally worn out or damaged.

"The fortifications at the English Turn and Fort St. Philip are unfinished, and at the former place, there is not a single gun mounted.

"The quarter-master's department is destitute of stationery, and with the exception of a few articles on a very small scale, may be considered, for all the purposes of war, extremely deficient.

"The hospital department is adequately supplied for a short period, if the troops of the line only are to be considered, but the medicines and stores on hand are deemed entirely insufficient for the augmentation of the established force, or the scenes of active war.

"The defences of the river are weak, and insufficient to defend that direct highway to this capital, against the vigorous attack of a brave and energetic antagonist; and the avenues of approach by the Lake Barataria, the Bayou La Fourche and the river Tesche are entirely unguarded.

"Advice has been received from such a concurrence of information, that little doubt can be entertained, two British vessels of war have appeared off the bar of Mobile bay, and it seems to be a current opinion, that, that place will soon be occupied by British troops.

"Having committed this statement to the consideration of the council, the General requests their sentiments on the following propositions.

* Horses to drag two six pounders.

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"1st.—To wait in the present posture of affairs, without change of position, or the adoption of any expensive precaution, until a hostile movement of the Spaniards, or an actual invasion of the British shall take place.

"2d.—To make every preparation for defence and offence, which the resources of the country and the powers of the General can effect, without one moment of unnecessary delay.

"3d.—To supply the defects of the several departments by purchase, as far as may be practicable, and is deemed necessary to meet all the exigencies of active war.

"4th.—To provide transport by land and by water for the artillery, ammunition, military stores, camp equipage, baggage and attirail of a column of two thousand men.

"5th.—To defend the river and every avenue leading from the coast to this capital, by the most judicious disposition of our present small naval force, the co-operation of the troops, and the aid of such batteries, floating and stationary, as may be judged necessary.

"6th.—To require from the executive magistrates of this state and the adjacent territory, their whole disposable force of volunteers or militia, to co-operate with the regular troops.

"7th.—To distribute the force thus to be drawn forth from the yeomanry of the country, under judicious officers at Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Barataria, La Fourche and Fort Stoddert, under such instructions as may be best calculated to protect the country against invasion, and to preserve its internal tranquillity.

"8th.—To embody the troops of the line at the pass of Christian, and hold them in readiness for prompt and active operations, to the east or west, offensive and defensive.

"9th.—To adopt such measures as may most effectually render abortive, the menaces of the Spanish governor of Pensacola, assert the rights of the nation, and protect our citizens east of Mobile bay.

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"10th.—To remove the Spanish pilot from Dauphin Island, in order to cut off all communication with the vessels of the enemy, and to provide for the defence of the bar, at the entrance of Mobile bay, if possible.

"11th.—To finish the batteries and works of Placquemine and the English Turn, and to have them suitably garrisoned and properly garnished with battering pieces.

"12th.—To make the requisite deposit of provisions, arms, ammunition, tools, stores and camp equipage at Fort Stoddert, for eventual operations in that quarter.

"The council after mature deliberation disapprove of the first proposition, and approve of the 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 11th and 12th propositions.

"Of the tenth proposition the council do not feel themselves qualified to give an opinion.

JOHN SHAW, *Capt. com'g. naval forces.*
ROBT. PURDY, *Lieut. Col. 7th infantry.*
WILL. MACREA, *Major, artillerists.*
DAN. CARMICK, *Major, marine corps.*
DAN. T. PATTERSON, *Lieut. U.S. navy.*
J. BLAKELEY, *Lieut. com'g. U.S. navy.*
BARTH. SHAUMBURGH, *D. Q. M. G.*
BENJAMIN MORGAN, *D. Com. Gen.*"

The judgment of the council of war concurring with my own views, and the measures* I had previously adopted, I determined to press defensive preparations† for the protection of the country, notwithstanding the discouragement expressed in the provisoes and reservations of the presidential instructions, of the 15th of April. The Petite Coquille, the mouths of the Mississippi, Mobile bay, Fort St. Philip and the English Turn, presented themselves to me as primary objects of attention; and I appeal to every honest man in New Orleans, and in the whole range of the public service from the Balize to Mobile, whether I failed in industry, activity or enterprize?

* See letter to secretary of war, July 28, 1812; vol. iii. page 337.

† See letters to secretary of war, Sept. 22, and Dec. 29th, 1812; vol. iii. page 338.

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Neither winds, rains, storms nor tempests ever interrupted my course, or arrested my progress; except indeed when cast away or upset, which happened twice on Lake Pontchartrain, and in the last instance it was the interposition of Providence alone which saved me from a watery grave. The following letter from Mr. W. Darby, the ingenious author of a map and geographical description of Louisiana, who, after making a correct chart of the mouths of the Mississippi, had engaged to survey the coast of the gulf from Chef Menteur* to the Achafalia, and the approaches to New Orleans, which I contemplated to obstruct and defend, will specifically set forth what were my intentions at the time; and it is a fact worthy of note, that I mentioned to Major Carmick of the marines, more than once, that in case of an invasion, I should look well to the Bayou Bien-venu, as the enemy might attempt a descent by that inlet, which I knew had been a noted avenue of the smugglers.

"*Philadelphia, April 28th*, 1816.

"Dear Sir,

"Your favour of the 26th inst. I received yesterday. You request me to state, as far as my recollection serves, the substance of a conversation I had with you at your head quarters near New Orleans, in the spring of 1813. In compliance therewith, I have with the utmost pleasure cast a retrospect on an interview, I never can reflect on without emotions of gratitude.

"After several years labour in collecting materials for a map of Louisiana, I found in the early part of 1813 my resources so far exhausted, as to render an application to the legislature of that state for pecuniary aid necessary. The application was made, but I did not obtain relief. Resting upon my own exertions, I then applied to you as commanding general of the district, for aid in completing a work of public as well as private utility. You received me in a manner which consoled me, under

* The western pass from Lake Pontchartrain into Lake Borgne, near the Bayou Bien-venue.

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an accumulated pressure of private embarrassment and public neglect. CHAP. XII.

"I found you seated at your table, enveloped with papers. I delivered a short note of introduction from Governor Claiborne, and after reading it, you desired me to explain my business, views and circumstances, which I did. You then observed that you were ready to afford me any assistance, consistent with your military duties, and added, that as the country was in danger of invasion, and open at various detached points, your intention was to have exact surveys taken, of all the inlets from Mobile to Achafalia—to erect forts in the following places, Mobile point, Petite Coquille, the bank of the south-east pass of the Mississippi river, Barrataria bay, I believe Belle Isle, near the mouth of the Achafalia, and on the Fourche—to place chevaux de frise or other impediments in the passes of Chef Menteur, Bayou Bien-venu, Terre aux Bœufs, Riviere au Chene, and the various passes of the Mississippi, except the south-east;—and finally, in all the water-courses through which an enemy could approach.—You then informed me, that Mr. Pilié was actually engaged in examining the passes towards the Mobile, and you desired me to proceed to the mouth of the Mississippi, and carefully measure the width and depth of all the passes, and particularly to determine the distance from a small island near the south-east channel to the bar, in order to determine whether a battery could be erected, within point blank distance of vessels whilst passing the bar—to determine the distance without the bar, where ships of 74 guns could anchor—also to determine with the utmost exactness in my power, the breadth, depth and width of the south-west pass, in order to enable you to estimate with certainty, the quantity and nature of obstruction, sufficient to prevent the entrance of vessels of war of any draught.

"You then placed at my disposal a detachment of sea fencibles, to enable me to execute the survey with the necessary correctness and despatch.

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"The survey was executed in the month of April, and a map of the several passes delivered into your office about the 5th of May, 1813.

"On an occasion subsequent to the first conversation, you reiterated your intention to adopt every necessary measure, to ascertain the assailable points, and to place every possible impediment against an invading force. You also observed, what eventually happened, that the British would endeavour to force their entrance by Mobile or Pontchartrain, and that the fort built on the Rigolets or Petite Coquille, would impede if not arrest their advance to New Orleans; you exhibited to me an old manuscript map of the sea coast of Louisiana and Florida, wherein was delineated with considerable precision, the various rivers, bays and inlets; you particularly requested information respecting the small water-courses, between Petite Coquille and Fort St. Philip, such as Chef Menteur, Bien-venu, Terre aux Bœufs, and the Riviere au Chene; it was then concluded for me to commence an actual survey, from the Chef Menteur to the Achafalia river.

"The preparations were in considerable advance for the expedition, when you were commanded to the northern army. With your departure ended all the public assistance I ever received in the execution of my work.

"It may be irrelevant to the subject of your request, but I cannot forbear to express my conviction, that had your plan of defence been carried into effect, no foreign force could ever advance in a hostile manner to the neighbourhood of New Orleans; the nature of the country renders all approach of an army by land, from the gulf of Mexico, impossible, and the result of the operations at Mobile point and Fort St. Philip, demonstrate what formidable obstacles small forts are, in such positions, to the passage of ships of war; their repulse at Mobile point no doubt prevented Petite Coquille from being attacked by the British. I have seen enough to convince me, that British soldiers can perform all that human beings can

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accomplish, but to reach New Orleans against the proper means of defence is beyond their power.

"The above may not be verbally our conversation; but from the strong impression made upon my mind, and from subsequent events so calculated to awaken recollection, I am confident the matter is correctly stated.

"Permit me to be, Sir,

"With much respect,

"Your obedient servant,

"WILLIAM DARBY.

"*General James Wilkinson.*"

Wilkinson receives orders to take Mobile.

Whilst actively engaged on the works of Petite Coquille, the English Turn, St. Philip and the Balize; and in collecting and preparing materials for other points of defence, in which I received the zealous co-operation of the navy and Commdore Shaw; who had at my instance laid down a block ship, to mount a heavy battery of 24 pounders, for the express defence of the approach by Lakes Borgne and Pontchartrain; I received an order on the 14th of March, from General John Armstrong who had been appointed to the war department, to possess myself of the country west of the Perdido, and particularly of the town and fortress of Mobile.* It was necessary to mask the design, to prevent the post from being reinforced from Pensacola, and thereby to save the effusion of blood, which national policy as well as humanity forbade. Measures were taken with Commodore Shaw and the navy, and the necessary equipments were pressed, but we were not able to reach the vicinity of the place before the night of the 8th; dispossessing a Spanish guard at Dauphin island in our route, and intercepting a Spanish transport destined to Mobile, having on board an officer and a detachment of artillerists, with provisions and munitions of war for the garrison. The first intimation of our approach to the Spaniards was from our drums. The place was strong and well found in ar-

* See vol. iii. page 339—40.

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tillery, but the garrison consisted of one hundred and fifty combatants only, and was short of provisions, as they depended chiefly upon the town for daily subsistence. In case of resistance I had intended to indulge six hundred men with the escalade of Fort Charlotte, the position and form of which I perfectly understood, and ladders had accordingly been prepared; but the commandant surrendered under a convention on the 18th, and singular as it may appear, when the surrender was announced, the mortification of my officers* and men was manifest. If there be any credit due to this diminutive affair, Commodore Shaw and the navy are entitled to a full share of it; but when merits are measured by blood, we can have no pretensions to commendation. The following particulars, as mere matter of record, may be worthy of a place in these memoirs, as they have not been promulgated by the government.

The place surrenders by convention the 16th of April.

"*Camp near Mobile, April 12th*, 1813.

"Sir,

"The troops of the United States under my command do not approach you as the enemies of Spain, but by order of the President they come to relieve the garrison which you command, from the occupancy of a post within the legitimate limits of those states. I therefore hope, Sir, that you may peacefully retire from Fort Charlotte, and from the bounds of the Mississippi territory (east of the Perdido river) with the garrison you command, and the public and private property which may appertain thereto.

"I flatter myself that you will meet a proposition so reasonable and so just, in the amicable spirit with which it is offered, and that no time may be unnecessarily lost

* The detachment taken from the 3d and 7th regiments, was commanded by that excellent officer, Major Carmick of the marines, and more physical force, energy of character, or perfect formation than this body of 600 infantry exhibited, has not been shewn in the army of the United States before or since.

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in carrying it into execution. My aid-de-camp, Major H. D. Peire, will present you this note, and if convenient to you, will receive your answer. CHAP. XII.

"With all due consideration and respect,

"I have the honour to be,

"Your most ob't humble serv't,

"JA. WILKINSON.

"*The Officer commanding Fort Charlotte.*"

"*Fort Charlotte, Mobile, April 13th,* 1813.

"Most Excellent Sir,

"I have marked the contents of your letter of yesterday, and I have commissioned Lieutenant Don Francisco Morrison to confer with your excellency on the points in dispute.

"God preserve your excellency many years.

"CAYETANO PEREZ.

"*His Excellency Don James Wilkinson.*"

"*Camp near Mobile, April 13th,* 1813.

"Sir,

"I have received your answer to the proposition contained in my letter of yesterday, and concur in every particular, with the exception to the removal of the artillery and munitions of war, which must be bona fide delivered to an officer of the corps I command, who will receipt for the articles he may receive, and make the government of the United States accountable for the same. This measure is indispensable to the prompt evacuation of the place, which cannot be defended, whatever may be the gallantry of the garrison, because it is without provision, and by the disposition of the forces under my command, is cut off from the possibility of succour.

"Should wind and weather permit, transports will be furnished this day; the garrison must commence its embarkation to-morrow morning, and the next day posses-

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sion must be given to a detachment of the artillery and infantry of the United States.

" The flotilla under my direction will move up to the town to-day, but no communication will be permitted further than the landing of camp equipage, baggage and provisions.

" I have the honour to be,
" Respectfully, Sir,
" Your obedient servant,
" JA. WILKINSON.

" *Captain Cayetano Perez,*
Commanding Fort Charlotte."

CONVENTION.

" Convencion hecha en este dia 13 de Abril de 1813, entre el Mayor-general Don Jayme Wilkinson, commandante de las fuerzas de los Estados Unidos de America, y el Capitan Don Cayetano Perez, mandando la guarnicion Espanola del Fuerte Carlota de Mobila.

"Convention entered into on the 13th of April, 1813, between Major Gen. James Wilkinson, commanding the forces of the United States of America, and Captain Don Cayetano Perez, commanding the Spanish garrison of Fort Charlotte, Mobile.

ARTICLES.

" 1. Capitan Don Cayetano Perez propone evaguar con la guarnicion de su mando, el 15 de Abril, 1813.

" 1. Captain Cayetano Perez proposes to evacuate Fort Charlotte on the 15th April, 1813.

" Agreed, for the hour of 5 o'clock, P. M. But a detachment of the troops of the United States shall take post in the vicinity of the fort, to occupy it in the moment of its evacuation.

" 2. Que la guarnicion Espanola estando destituida

" 2. The Spanish garrison being destitue of provi-

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de proviciones, unica causa que le precisa evaguar, será provista de viveres, y transportes para Panzacola.

sions, a supply is required, together with transports to convey the troops to Pensacola.

" Agreed—But the Spanish government shall be accountable to the United States for the expense. The vessels to sail as flags of truce, and to be guaranteed by the government of Spain against capture, and also against port charges and pilotage. Major-general Wilkinson engages, on the part of the United States, to guarantee the safe passage of the Spanish garrison, against the vessels of those states, and the powers at peace with them.

" 3. Que le artilleria y todo lo que corresponde a ella, y las municiones de guerra actualmente en la Fuerte Carlota, sera embarcada con las tropas, y se esta propocicion ne se admite, se nombrara, por el commandante Espanol, un official para quel unido con otro del mismo grado de los Estados Unidos, tomen un inventario de la artilleria, y municiones de guerra; de todo lo qual el official Americano, dara un recibo obligatario, autorizado por el General, con-

" 3. Captain Perez proposes that the cannon, its attirail, and the munitions of war belonging to it, actually in Fort Charlotte, shall be embarked with the troops; or should this proposition be rejected, an officer shall be appointed by the Spanish commandant, to meet an officer of equal rank of the American forces, to take an inventory of the artillery and munitions of war, for which the American officer shall give receipts, obligatory on the American government, to

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tra el Gobierno Americano, de que se dara cuenta al Gobierno Espanol.

"4. Que hasta quel la guarnicion, no se haga a la vela, las tropas Americanos, un se acercaran al fuerte.

"5. Que un official de artilleria, y el guarda almacen de los guarnicion Espanol, se permita queder, para inventarian la artilleria, y municiones de guerra, quel pertenecer a ella y chancetar, las cuentas de la guarnicion baso la franza de seguridad, contra toda molestacion de personas, papeles o propriedades.

"Mobila y Fuerte Carlota, 13 de Abril de 1813.

"CAYETANO PEREZ."

account for the same to the Spanish government.

"The first proposition being rejected, the alternative is acceded to, and Major-general Wilkinson will see it carried into effect.

"4. That until the Spanish garrison has sailed, the American troops shall not approach the fort.

"Agreed, under the stipulation of the first article, that precaution being necessary to the safety of the public property.

"5. That an officer of artillery, and a quartermaster of the Spanish garrison, be permitted to remain to deliver the artillery and munitions of war appurtenant thereto, and to settle the accounts of the garrison, under a guarantee of safety against the molestation of persons, papers or property.

"Agreed until the objects of their respective duties shall be accomplished.

"Mobile, Fort Charlotte, April 13, 1813.

"HENRY D. PEIRE,
Major of Louisiana Vol. and aid-de-camp to Major-general Wilkinson, being duly authorised."

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ADDITIONAL ARTICLE.

"Las parties contractantes combienen, que el Teniente Sands, del 1 regimiente de artilleria de los Estados Unidos, y el Teniente de dicho cuerpo, al serviceo de S. M. C. Don Juan Estevez, examinaran, entregaran, y se daran recibos correspondentes, por la artilleria y municiones de guerra, quel la guarnicion, pueda desar en el Fuerte Carlota.

"CAYETANO PEREZ."

"The contracting parties agree that Lieutenant Sands of the 1st regiment of artillery, on the part of the United States, and Lieutenant Don Juan Estevez, on the part of the Spanish government, shall meet, examine, and form inventories of the artillery and munitions of war, which may be left in Fort Charlotte by the Spanish guarrison, for which the said Lieutenant Sands shall give duplicate receipts, agreeably to the third article.

"H. D. PEIRE,
Major & Aid-de-camp."

GENERAL ORDERS.

"*Mobile*, 15*th April*, 1813.

"Lieutenant Sands of the artillery, is appointed on the part of the United States, to meet an officer of the Spanish artillery, in order to make an inventory of the ordnance, ammunition and military stores, to be left in Fort Charlotte, and will receipt in duplicate for the same, as the agent for the government.

(Signed) "JA. WILKINSON.

TRUE COPY.

"A. L. SANDS, *Lieut. Art.*"

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Inventory of ordnance and munitions of war, received of Lieutenant Don Juan Estevez, of his Catholic Majesty's artillery, by Lieutenant A. L. Sands, of the United States regiment of artillerists, agreeably to the convention of Fort Charlotte, Mobile.

FIT FOR SERVICE.

2	iron 18	pounders,	French
6	do 12	do	do
8	do 9	do	do
2	do 8	do	do
6	do 6	do	do
13	do 4	do	do
9	do ½	pound swivels,	do
3	brass 4	pound's. mounted	do
1	do 5½	in. howitz. do	do
4	do ¼	pound swivels,	do
9	24	pound round shot	
308	18	do	do
962	12	do	do
1158	9	do	do
1403	6	do	do
1901	4	do	do
90	6	double head shot	
72	8	inch shells,	empty
224	5½	do	do
25	8	do	filled
51	5½	do	do fuse and powder damaged
161	8	inch filled fuzes	
150	5½	do	
10	24	pound cannister shot	
47	18	do	do
60	12	do	do
103	9	do	do
187	8	do	do
102	6	do	do
159	4	do	do
61	3	do	do
45	1	do	do
86	¾	do	do
216	½	do	do
186	¼	do	do
42	18	do	grape shot
279	12	do	do
9	9	do	do
191	8	do	do
357	6	pound grape shot	
187	4	do	do
15	3	do	do
23	½	do	do
2332	1	do	shot for grape
400	½	do	do
150	¼	do	do
1470	2	oz.	do
35	18	pounders filled	cylinders.
42	12	do	do
158	8	do	do
119	6	do	do
199	4	do	do
40	3	do	do
6	¾	do	do
8	½	do	do
100	¼	do	do
2407	linen	cylinders,	assorted
60	4	pound flannel	cylinders, assorted
1	Spanish	Jack and lever	
1	do	gin, complete	
40	barrels	of charcoal	
995	sand	bags	
154	4	lb. round shot,	with wooden sabots
43764	musket	flints	
4560	ball	cartridges	
1680	moss	wads, assorted	
48	faggot	torches	
6	marine	fire grapplings	
14	marine	fire bottles	
83	fire	balls	
7	steel	spikes	
1	white	muslin flag	
37	iron	stools for grape	
61	pounds	of wax candles for the magazine	
4627	lbs.	lead balls,	assorted

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139 lbs. buck shot
40 lbs. small nails
196 lbs. 7 inch spikes
193 lbs. 5 do
85 port fires
40 powder horns
265 raw hide sand baskets
3 cannon slings
145 beds and coins
20 tompions
18 lead aprons
4 powder wire sieves
1 blacksmith's anvil
1 tinman's do
1180 lbs. pig lead
40 bayonets
3 halberts
6 crooked handles for 4 lb. spunges
62 handspikes
2 gunner's quadrants
1 pair washer hooks
2 pair nippers for placing shells
2 screw wrenches
2 wooden fuze sets
2 tin powder funnels
2 iron port fire formers
2 port fire stocks
1¼ lbs. spunge
9 crow-bars
12 washers
47 ladles, assorted
43 worms, do
31 gun scrapers, do
40 rammers, do
113 lbs. bar iron
188 lbs. steel
87 lbs. dry Spanish brown
12 musket cartridge formers
3 lint stocks
1 wooden spetula
1 leather port fire case
1 leather tube bag
1 priming wire
2 grind stones
4 hooks and thimbles
87 pick axes
30 hoes
2 melting ladles
2 lead skimmers
8 drawing knives
2 frows
3 carpenter's adzes
41 trunnion plates
1 large beam and scales
200 lbs. iron weights
4 carpenter's iron squares
3 blacksmith's sledges
2 stone do
1 pair crop bit tongs
2 pair blacksmith's do
2 pair bullet cutters
10 screw augers, assorted
2 pair carpenter's compasses
45 chissels, assorted
15 gouges, do
3 smoothing planes
7 whip saws
2 whip saw boxes
3 blacksmith's vices
2 fascine hatchets
9 tin lanthorns
2 dark do
4 tin cylinder cases
6 cross cut saws
2 copper measures, for powder
22 copper hoops
2 bullet & buck shot moulds
4 large ammunition boxes
1 large launch, without oars or sails
12 cedar water buckets
1 copper magazine lock
1 conductor & lightning rod
2 tarpaulins
4050 lbs. cannon powder.
450 lbs. musket do.

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UNFIT FOR SERVICE.

1 iron 8 pounder	21 4 pound cylinders
3 do 6 do	429 3 inch hand grenades
1 do 4 do	18 rockets
2 do 2 do	35 Spanish truck carriages
2 do 1 pound swivels	2390 lbs. powder, middling
4 do ½ do do	1710 lbs. do bad
1 brass 8 inch mortar	2 tarpaulins.

A. L. SANDS, *Lieut. Art. As. Dep. Com. of Ord. and Agent of the United States.*

"*Panzacola*, 12 *de Abril, de* 1813.

"Excellentissimo Senor,

"En la manana de este dia, se me ha presentado el destacamento quel se hallaba en el puesto de la Isla Delfina, expresando haberle mandado retirar las tropas del cargo de V. E. Este incidente me ha sorprendido, pues no teniendo, yo noticia de quel los Estados Unidos, hayan declarado la guerra a' la nacion Espanola, ni esta a' aquellos, me es sobremanera doloroso, y reparable ver cometer una decidida hostilidad por tropas neutrales y amigas en un territorio Espanol, cuyo mando y conservacion me esta encomendada; y aun quando no hubiese sido obligado a retirarse el destacamento, siempre me admiraria la emrada de V. E. y de sus tropas en esta provincia sin mi conocimiento y participacion. Han sido tambien detenidos varios buques sin permitirseles la entrada en Movila, cuyo procedimiento es igualmente hostil: y desde luego tales demonstraciones me estrechan a preguntar solamente a V. E. se nuestras dos naciones se encuentran ya en declarada guerra. Con esta ocasion tengo el honor de manifestar a V. E. la alta consideracion con que lo distringo.

"Dios guarde a V. E. muchos annos.

"MAURICIO ZUNIGA."

"*Excmo. Senor Don Jayme Wilkinson.*"

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(TRANSLATION.)

"*Pensacola, 12th April,* 1813.

"Most Excellent Sir,

"On the morning of this day, the detachment which I had posted on Dauphin Island, presented themselves to me, saying, that it had retreated from that post by order of your excellency. This circumstance has surprised me much, as I possess no information whatever, that the United States has declared war against the Spanish nation, nor the latter against them. It is to me as painful in the extreme, as it is singular, to observe an hostility so decided by neutral troops, and friends, within the Spanish territory, the command and preservation of which, has been committed to me; and even if the detachment had not been compelled to retreat, I should have been surprised, at the arrival of your excellency and your army in this province, without my knowledge or participation.

"It appears there have been several vessels detained, and prevented from entering the port of Mobile which act is equally hostile, and consequently such demonstrations oblige me, to ask your excellency the simple question, whether our two nations have already declared war?

"I have the honour on this occasion to manifest towards your excellency, the high consideration in which I hold you, may God preserve your excellency a thousand years.

"MAURICE ZUNIGA.

"*His Excellency*
General James Wilkinson."

"*Fort Charlotte, Mobile, April 16th,* 1813.

"Sir,

"Yesterday about 1 o'clock, P. M. I had the honour to receive your excellency's letter of the 12th instant,

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from the hands of Don Bernard Prieto, to which I shall reply with the frankness of a soldier, and without circumlocution or concealment.

"In taking possession of this fortress, I have merely obeyed the orders of the President of the United States, to assert the laws of the government, and enforce the civil institutions of the Mississippi territory, as far as the river Perdido; all the antecedent measures taken by the forces under my command, were precautionary to cut off reinforcements and supplies, and I thank God they have had the effect, to prevent the effusion of a drop of blood.

"I am sensible no war exists between our respective nations, and I pray Heaven to avert the evil; I therefore did not approach the late garrison of Fort Charlotte, with hostile intentions against Spain, but to relieve it from an occupancy deemed illegitimate by the sovereign councils of my country, and highly inconvenient to its citizens; and I will take the liberty to refer you to my correspondence with Captain Perez, for evidence of the amicable course I have given to the whole transaction.

"I beg leave to reciprocate the sentiments of respect, and personal good wishes with which you honour me; and am with the highest consideration,

"Your Excellency's

"Most obedient servant,

"JA. WILKINSON.

"*His Excellency*
Don Manuel Zuniga."

"*Fort Charlotte, Mobile, April 16th,* 1813.

"Sir,

"I have the pleasure to address you from this place, of which I got possession yesterday evening without an appeal to arms. The documents under cover will best expose to you the course I have pursued, which may, I hope, meet the approbation of the executive. It is somewhat difficult to give an amicable aspect, to the investissement of a military post, but I have made the attempt, with what success you are to judge.

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"You will perceive I have resisted the embarkation of the cannon and military stores. A just ground of apprehension, founded on confidential advice received the night of the 12th, which you will find under another cover, led to this step, on which I beg to receive the determination of the executive, for my government, as speedily as possible.

"The co-operation which I had designed by land and water, to deprive the garrison, not only of succour but of advice from Pensacola, succeeded admirably and with complete effect. Much credit is due to Commodore Shaw and to Lieutenant-colonel Bowyer, for their promptitude and decision; and the countenance of the little corps I command, composed of detachments from the 3d and 7th infantry, with one company of artillery and a body of Mobile volunteers, justify the belief; that whenever put to the test they will prove themselves worthy the name of Americans, and a match for equal numbers, taken from the best troops in the world.

"As soon as I have looked about me, I shall make the best disposition of my puny force, to defend the country and assert our jurisdiction to the Perdido. But, Sir, it should be remembered, that I am placed in a perilous situation, with the ocean in my front, the Creek nation in my rear, the Choctaws on my right, and the Seminoles on my left. The inclosed will give you my effective strength, and I can expect no succour but by the abandonment of New Orleans, from any quarter nearer than Tennessee or Georgia; it follows, that should we be attacked in force and with decision, by land and water, the country must be lost; for two thousand men and fifteen gun boats, would be necessary to resist such an attack successfully. These observations are made from a respect to candour, to justice and our relative stations, and will I have no doubt be received with the spirit in which they are offered. Yet you may calculate with confidence, on whatever my most active exertions and best judgment can effect, with the means I command.

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"You have under cover a return of the ordnance found in Fort Charlotte, amounting to 47 pieces. It will take several days to inventory the amount of the stores, tools and implements.

"I yesterday received a letter from his excellency Governor Zuniga, of which you have a copy under cover, together with my answer.

"With great respect,

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

(Signed) "JA. WILKINSON.

"*The Hon. General Armstrong,*
Secretary of War."

[PRIVATE.]

"*Fort Charlotte, Mobile, April 16th,* 1813.

"Sir,

"The inclosed information from a secret agent whom I had stationed at Pensacola, and in whom I can depend, determined me to prevent the removal of the artillery, and munitions of war from Fort Charlotte, because they are necessary to the defence of the harbour and the post; and we may find it extremely difficult in the progress of the war, to replace them. If I mistake not, by the treaty of cession with France, it was made optional with the United States, to hold the Spanish artillery at a fair price; but we injudiciously declined the purchase, when we took possession of New Orleans, and it was removed by the Spaniards to Pensacola. From the best information I possess, I believe the bay may be commanded by a *heavy battery at Mobile point, with the co-operation of a sufficient force of gun boats.* I shall examine the position and the channel in a few days, and if I find the plan feasible, I propose to erect a post there, with a garrison competent to resist any predatory attempt; and in such case I shall be obliged to employ ten or twelve of the heaviest guns of this place.

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"I will send you by the next mail a plan of this fort, and an estimate of the sum necessary to make it defensible. It was built by the French before the war of '56, and is a regular quadrangular work with four bastions, and casements for five hundred men; and it would require that force, to make a stout resistance against an invading army.

"The carriages of the guns are all of Spanish construction, greatly defective and unfit to sustain a heavy cannonade. They must be all remounted, and this service can be performed at our laboratory and work shops in New Orleans only.

"*I intreat that the secretary of the navy may authorise, the increase of our gun boats and block ships, by every means in our power.* The Lord Nelson merchant ship, of which I have before written you, should be armed and equipt. She is new, is coppered to her bends and copper fastened every where. I asked in my memoir on the defence of this country *forty additional gun boats, and if my request had been attended to, we might rest in tranquillity.* We have of those vessels *only five fit for service*, and three of these a few days since, offered the Herald sloop of war battle, in seven fathom water, but after exchanging a few shot, she declined the combat and sheered off.

"With perfect respect, I am, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

(Signed) "JA. WILKINSON.

"*The Hon. John Armstrong,*
Secretary of War."

"*War Department, 22d May,* 1813.

"Sir,

"Your despatches of the 16th and 20th April last, dated from Mobile, have been received. *It gives much satisfaction* that the business has been managed in a way to avoid the effusion of blood, and under forms, which leave the friendly relations of the two powers unimpaired.

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"Your question in relation to the cannon, is under consideration; in the mean time, if practicable, their carriages may be repaired.

"Advices through other channels, and directly from Pensacola, state, that though the garrison has been *apparently* strengthened by one hundred mulatoes—this increased number has added much to their embarrassment, on the score of subsistence. Until their wants on this head are supplied, they are in no condition, either to maintain their own post (if attacked) or to disturb your's.

"Congress meet on Monday next. *You will await further orders.* Accept, Sir, the assurances of my very high respect.

(Signed) "JOHN ARMSTRONG."

With respect to the Spanish artillery and munitions of war taken in Fort Charlotte, which I detained on the grounds assigned in my letter to the secretary of war of the 16th of April, I have never received any other information, than that contained in the secretary's answer of the 22d of May. A few days after the surrender of Fort Charlotte, I examined the position of Mobile point, and the direction of the channel into the bay, and determined to occupy the former. For this purpose, nine of the heaviest pieces taken from the Spaniards were ordered thither to be placed in battery, and in the mean time my attention was carried to the prosecution of my orders. I crossed the country forty miles to the right bank of the Perdido, about five leagues from Pensacola, where I projected a strong stockade work with block-houses, and intrusted the execution to Colonel John Bowyer. I then reconnoitred Perdido bay, and ascending a handsome arm of it, which enters from the westward, I traversed a portage,* of two miles across a pine

General Wilkinson occupies Mobile point.

* I had previously discovered this inland communication, and by it had already opened a road, and transported provisions, artillery and munitions of war to Colonel Bowyer, at the post which he was erecting on the Perdido, which was broke up, I presume by order of the President.

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plain, to a navigable creek, which falls into the bay of Bon Soucour, by which I proceeded to Mobile point, where, with the assistance of the modest, amiable and intelligent engineer, Monsieur Pilié, I planned and staked out a work called Seraf, afterwards named Bowyer, and distinguished by the gallant defence of Major Lawrence, and the destruction of the Hermes sloop of war; and thus this work by impairing the confidence of the enemy, laid the foundation of the safety of New Orleans. That excellent naval officer, Lieutenant Alexis, who, should he receive due patronage, will do honour to his profession, if he is not like that inestimable gem, Blakely, prematurely called to the regions above, was at that time on station off Mobile point, and with his co-operation, I ascertained that the battery commanded the channel at about half cannon shot.

Having discharged the duties required of me in the quarter of Mobile, and placed Colonel Constant,* of the 3d regiment, in command; I sailed for New Orleans, where I arrived the nineteenth of May, and found orders from the war department, commanding me to repair to the northward; the sequel of which will be detailed in the third volume of these memoirs. But before I leave Louisiana, the land of my choice, and the country in which, with the will of God, I shall pass my remaining days, I must be permitted to present a rapid view of certain occurrences, which took place there during my command in 1812-13; and to glance at the important incidents which ensued my absence; that I may warn a people most dear to me, of the perils they have escaped and the causes which produced them. I owe it indispensably to the community whose destinies I am doomed to share, to place the past before them, and instruct them how to provide for the future.

* This gentleman possessed too much pride and spirit to brook an indignity, and being superceded in his rank by President Madison, he threw up his commission.

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CHAP. XII.

Importance of the port of New Orleans to the western states.

New Orleans from its geographical position is certainly the most succourless point of the union; and it is rendered the most important within the national limits, by the exclusive control of the trade of the Mississippi. It is therefore the most interesting spot for an enemy of the United States to seize upon. *The commerce of the Atlantic states may be incommoded by the occlusion of a sea port, but the trade of the whole western country is destroyed by the loss of New Orleans; the Mississippi being to the western states and territories, what all the sea ports from Georgia to Maine, inclusive, are to the Atlantic states.* Yet notwithstanding these obvious facts were placed before President Madison, in the most perspicuous manner, as early as the month of March, 1812, having made up his mind to opposite conclusions, he resisted the truth with that pertinacity which forms a prominent trait of his character; hence, my premonitions were treated as the chimeras of an officer solicitous only to swell his command; and a whole year after these warnings, he continued to hug himself in the conceit of his superior sagacity,* resting on the ignorance and negligence of the enemy for his justification; and hence every precaution of defence was not only neglected, but works actually occupied were abandoned—on the Perdido, Mobile point, the English Turn, and the Balize—and by a peremptory interdiction of President Madison, through his war minister, the defensive measures I had taken were in effect condemned, and the completion of the works designed by me were prohibited; and whilst General Jackson was hunting the Creeks, and carrying his arms against the wretched Spaniards at Pen-

* In a letter received from that eminent physician and excellent man, the deceased Doctor Daniel, dated Washington City, March 10th, 1813, I have a rich exposition of the intrigues and corruption of the metropolis at that day, from which I extract the following paragraph: "*My conversation with the President was very general, the only part of it that could be considered as having connexion with yourself, was the decided manner in which he gave his reasons for believing there was no danger of an invasion of New Orleans. On this point I thought he appeared considerably in earnest.*"

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sacola, New Orleans was left to defend itself, until the enemy were found at the portal. Then, indeed, when the safety of the emporium of the west, and millions of individual property were committed to the caprice of fortune, the little gentleman, as General Armstrong designated him, trembled for his blind obstinacy, and was heard to observe at one of his levees, "*It was to be regretted General Wilkinson's plans had not been adopted.*" When, however, the place had been saved by the interposition of Heaven, and the gallantry of a handful of men, headed by an intrepid leader; overwhelmed as he ought to have been, with the consciousness of having neglected every measure necessary to its safety; and even of having left General Jackson WITHOUT MEN AND WITHOUT ARMS,* three months after he was warned of the designs of the enemy; and six months after the General had demanded small arms, cannon, and munitions of war for New Orleans.† O matchless modesty!!!

* General Jackson, in his letter December 29th, 1814, informs Colonel Monroe, secretary of war, that his effective strength did not exceed 3000, and that the Kentuckians had not arrived. Again, January 9th, 1815: "I received little additional strength from the Kentuckians, but few of that detachment being armed." General Adair to General Jackson, March 20th, 1815: "Four hundred Kentuckians were ordered to join General Morgan on the west side of the river, but only 200 could procure arms."

General Jackson to General Adair, April 2d, 1815: "The whole force employed on the line opposed to General Packenham, was 3,690 men; the Kentuckians on that day were 550, and on the 12th of April only 959." *Kentuc. Pallad. May 8th, 1815.*

General Jackson to Mr. Monroe, secretary of war, New Orleans, Dec. 16th, 1814: "We have no arms here. Will the government order a supply? If it will, let it be speedily. Without arms, a defence cannot be made." *Latour*, p. 66.

† "During the summer, while yet among the Creeks, General Jackson had made a requisition of a quantity of arms, ammunition, heavy cannon, balls, bombs, &c. to be sent to New Orleans; but such was the fatality that appeared attached to all the measures adopted for our defence, that it was not till the middle of January, 1815, that a very small proportion of what had been ordered arrived at New Orleans." *Latour*, p. 66.

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President Madison was eager to share the laurels with its brave defenders, and to vote himself a triumph, when in truth he had merited the * * *

It has been seen in the instructions with which I left the seat of government, that no additional regular force was assigned me; that permanent fortifications were discouraged; that under peculiar circumstances, I was advised to seek orders for my conduct at the seat of government, and with a discretion thus circumscribed, I was not allowed even to call out the territorial militia, unless "*threatened with an immediate attack by a large armament.*" The destitute condition of the district is distinctly marked in the minutes of the council of war, and the measures I determined to adopt are best explained by facts. Fort St. Philip had been repaired and endowed with a numerous train of 24 pounders, howitzers, &c.; the foundation of a work was in forwardness at the Balize, on which three 24 pounders were actually in battery, three others were ready to be placed, and it was intended to add a 13 inch mortar to annoy the passage of the bar—ground had been examined and cleared off for a battery, to co-operate with St. Philip from the opposite side of the river—a strong work had been projected at the English Turn, to command the river, and sustain a siege, and was more than half finished—a work had been laid out at the Petite Coquille, where nine heavy guns had been placed on temporary platforms, and it would have been completed in two months—the foundation of a co-operating battery had been commenced on the opposite marsh—the ground had been measured and cleared off at Chef Menteur, for a fortification to prevent a landing at that point, or a passage into Lake Pontchartrain by that communication—the battery had been established at Mobile point, and the works* were pro-

Wilkinson projects works for the defence of New Orleans.

* A part of my plan at this place received no attention after I left the country. It was to occupy a sand hill a few hundred yards in rear of the water battery, which overlooked and commanded the point in every direction, and from the nature of the soil cannot be approached,

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gressing rapidly—measures were in preparation for the obstruction of the south-west pass of the Mississippi, and every avenue of approach from the ocean; and the block-ship was in forwardness, which alone, with an American crew and commander, would have been competent to defend Lakes Borgne and Pontchartrain, against any force the enemy could have sent against her in those shoal waters; and by this single provision, the left flank and rear of the city would have been protected. Five hundred thousand dollars more would have completed these defences, with two additional block-ships and fifteen gun vessels, which with a comparatively inconsiderable land force, would have placed the country in security against the utmost efforts of the enemy. In this state of things, I was suddenly recalled from the command, and simultaneous with this mandate, an order issued from the war department, under the authority of President Madison, limiting the whole expenses of the quarter-master's department, including the ordnance and fortifications, to $5,000 per month; and the drafts of the deputy quarter-master general for previous services, were protested, and justice shamefully withheld from the inhabitants, *on the plea that the disbursements were unauthorised;* notwithstanding the letter of the secretary of war to me, dated the 20th June, 1812; and thus President Madison commanded with one hand, and countermanded with the other. The necessary consequence was, that the unfinished works were instantly abandoned, and suffered to tumble to pieces; those at Mobile point, at the Perdido and the Balize, being deserted, and the guns actually removed, but the former was repossessed by order of General Jackson, on the earnest application of the inhabitants; and to cap the climax of folly, the workmen were dismissed from the block-ship after she had been caulked up to the bends, and the materials were on the spot to finish her, where it is a fair presumption they would be suffered to rot, together with

Works and block ship abandoned, on account of quarter-master general's bills being protested.

nor is it in reach of shipping. To secure the water battery this point must be occupied. I had also projected a co-operating battery on Dauphin island.

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the vessel, did it depend on President Madison, for want of the necessary attention to her preservation. For 100,000 stand of small arms have been destroyed in the last twenty years, in defect of the regulations of the ordnance department, and the expense of a few armourers, and a little oil. We began the late war with 200,000 muskets, but how many did we bring out of it. The inquiry would repay Congress their trouble, if it could be candidly and honestly conducted; but of this I despair, under our present masters.

Conduct of President Madison, particularly as it respected New Orleans.

Without questioning President Madison's loyalty, I confess I am at a loss for the evidence of his sacrifices to the cause of his country, and those who know him better than I do, make no doubt that in all conflicting interests he would prefer his personal gratifications to the public weal. But how shall we account for his persevering neglect of New Orleans, even to the last hour of the war? I appeal to candid, independent, honest men of all parties, to decide whether *a partisan of the enemy could have done more to betray New Orleans into his hands*, than by withholding men and arms from its protection, and by prohibiting every work of defence, and even abandoning some important positions which had been taken by me?

As early as the middle of September, 1814, a concurrence of reports from the West Indies, Pensacola, Mobile, and by other channels, conspiring with the movements of the enemy from Baltimore, left no doubts in the mind of any person who reflected on the subject, that they had at length determined to invade the Mississippi, which they had so long and so unaccountably neglected. My own opinions on this subject had never varied, and my solicitude for Louisiana had never slept. At that period President Madison, and his confidential coadjutor, General Armstrong, *forgetting right and consulting vengeance*, had degraded me from my rank, and done all in their power, by secret calumnies and congressional intrigues,* to stab my character; yet

* See the report of the secretary of war, explaining the causes of the failure of the arms of the United States on the northern frontier,

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my love of country was not diminished by persecution. After the political demise of Armstrong, I addressed his energetic successor, who was labouring to recover the high way of popularity, out of which Armstrong had jostled him, in the hope of attracting the presidential attention to the defence of New Orleans, by the earnestness of the following letter.

" Hager's town, Oct. 5th, 1814.

" Sir,

Wilkinson's letter respecting his papers left in New Orleans.

" The apprehension which I feel, that the enemy will take possession of New Orleans, makes it proper for me to state to you, that when ordered from the command in that quarter, I was obliged to leave my official papers behind me; comprehending my military correspondence from the year 1791 to 1812, with manuscript charts and plans of our posts and occupancies, critical points and passes, from Fort Niagara by Black Rock, Buffaloe, Presq' Isle, Sandusky, Fort Miami, Detroit, St. Clair river, Michilimackinac and Chicago, including St. Joseph and the Saut de St. Marie—from Chicago to the Riviere Plein, then down the Illinois and Mississippi rivers to St. Louis—our former military routes and positions north-west of the Ohio—the same of the Tennessee river, from S. W. point down to its mouth—a survey of the route from the district of Natchez to Bear creek —our posts and occupancies on the Arkansaw and Red rivers, and a survey of the route from the latter to the Spanish post of Nacogdoches—our former and present posts from the Kaskaskias down the Mississippi to the Balize—the posts at the Bayou St. John in rear of New Orleans, and at the efflux of Lake Pontchartrain, called the Rigolets—the inland navigation to Mobile bay—the work at Mobile point, and also Fort Charlotte in the town of Mobile, and from thence to the confluence of the Alabama and Tombigbee river—up the first to the village of Tookabatchee, and up the second to the site of

presented to the House of Representatives by President Madison, Jan 31st, 1814.

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Fort Confederation, erected by the Spaniards;—and among other documents, a memoir describing every direct and devious approach to the city of New Orleans, and every feeble and strong point of defence from within and without.

"I have recently written to three gentlemen in New Orleans, to have those papers removed to a place of security; but as this is a precarious reliance, and I consider it a matter of importance, to save those papers and documents from the hands of the enemy; I am induced to request an order from you, to the commanding officer at New Orleans, to receive my directions for their transmittal to Pittsburgh, in charge of an officer of trust, either by a public barge or by the steam boat if in operation.

"I had prepared charges against your predecessor for manifold usurpations and abuses while in office, which his dishonest retreat I fear has baffled; subsequent to which and anterior to your appointment to the department, the painful situation in which I find myself, and my solicitude to be unshackled, that I might take my share of the perils of my profession, led me to address the President on the subject.* Will you be so good as to tell me what I have to expect in the result of my application; the lash of persecution has taught me patience in adversity, yet it is natural and I hope reasonable, that I should desire to be relieved from the tortures of suspense.

"With perfect respect,
"I have the honour to be, Sir,
"Your obedient servant,
"JA. WILKINSON.

"*The Hon. James Monroe,*
Secretary of War."

This letter treated with marked neglect.

I delivered this letter to a gentleman of Congress, a common friend, who I know put it into the hands of Colonel Monroe, and what was the effect, silent contempt as

* See Appendix, No. VII.

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it respected my humble self, and a slumbering neglect as it respected the most important interests of the western country; the sapient President wrapped in security, saw thousands and tens of thousands of men, rushing into New Orleans for its defence in the month of November;* and with this overwhelming force General Jackson was to repel the rash invader. But General Jackson's correspondence with the secretary of war proves, that on the 29th December, eighteen days after the enemy had appeared at Ship Island, fourteen days after the capture of our flotilla, and seven days after they had taken ground within two leagues of New Orleans, his effective strength amounted to barely 3000, and that the patriotic Kentuckians had not arrived on that day; and it appears from the same authentic source, that arms could not be found for those citizen soldiers after they did arrive; and although General Jackson's force, as well as his loss by disease, has been carefully kept out of sight, yet, from a comparison of facts, it may be presumed his greatest numbers, armed and unarmed, did not at any time exceed 5000 men; with respect to arms, although a depot was in readiness at Pittsburgh, almost four months after the meditated attack on New Orleans was apprehended, we find them passing the Falls of Ohio (Louisville, Kentucky) the 6th January,† 1815, fourteen days after General Jackson's first combat, and two days only before the final defeat of the enemy; and if I am not misinformed, they were sent off, without the knowledge of the secretary of war, by the agent Mr. Woolly.

General Jackson's force, and loss by disease, concealed.

Arms pass Louisville (K.) the 6th Jan. 1815.

Yet the capital of Louisiana was saved, and the blaze of glory excited by its defence, merged all inquiry into causes and effects, into measures and conduct; this precisely suited the policy of the cabinet, whose agency in the transactions which led to the glorious event, would not bear examination; yet it is necessary the American people should be informed, of the true state of circum-

* It was confidently reported at Washington, that General Jackson was in New Orleans with 20,000 men, before he reached that city.

† See Nile's Register, 1815, page 379.

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stances and occurrences; because Generals Jackson and Coffee and Carroll and Adair and Morgan, with the band of patriots and heroes who executed their orders, may, before another war, leaving their well earned fame behind them, visit that "bourn from which no traveller returns;" and it is to benefit posterity and inform future historians, that I shall in this place record the following facts and incidents, as they have been presented to me or have fallen under my observation.

Motives for recording details of events on the Mississippi.

It has been seen, that the fortifications of St. Philip on the left bank of the Mississippi, of the Petite Coquille at the efflux of Lake Pontchartrain, and Fort Bowyer at Mobile point, were found by Gen. Jackson as I left them, with exception to the last place, the guns of which had, been withdrawn, I presume, by order of President Madison, and were restored by the General. The gallant defence of that post and the discomfiture of the light squadron under Captain Percy, with the loss of the Hermes sloop of war, had damped the confidence of the British officers in their floating batteries, when opposed to those which are stationary, at too great a distance for the effect of grape and cannister shot. But preliminary to the operations of the army, it was necessary to capture or destroy five gun boats, stationed at the bay of St. Louis, which composed the whole flotilla, ordered by President Madison for the defence of the Lakes Borgne and Pontchartrain, notwithstanding the requisition contained in my memoir of the 28th March, 1812, which was afterwards urgently repeated. This small squadron was commanded by Lieutenant Thomas Ap Catesby Jones, an officer who is destined, should his life be spared, to fill the highest stations of his profession, and do honour to his name and country. His look-out vessels discovered the approach of the enemy's fleet on the 9th December, and from his station he could, by a short traverse, readily reconnoitre its anchorage under Ship Island. He watched its movement and perceived its augmentation; and on the morning of the 13th, discovered a considerable number of boats approaching the pass of Christiana, with intention as he believed to debark, but

State of fortifications found by General Jackson.

Effects of the affair of Fort Bowyer.

The enemy's approach discovered.

Their anchorage at Ship Island, and movement.

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Movement of the American flotilla under Lieut. Jones.

he soon perceived from their direction through the pass, that his squadron was their object; he therefore got under weigh as soon as wind and water would permit, (it being flood tide and some of his boats aground, from an extraordinary run of the preceding ebb,) with intention to take a more defensible position, within the Rigolets, or at the Malheureuses Islands should it be judged advisable; in the mean time the enemy's attention was attracted by the Sea Horse, an armed transport, which had been sent into the bay of St. Louis; the vessel was well defended, but the crew being overpowered by numbers, was blown up; a baffling breeze, favoured by the tide, had pushed Lieutenant Jones and his squadron forward to les Isles Malheureuses (the Unfortunate Islands) an irregular range of small islands of brush wood and marsh extending westward, and lying twelve or fifteen miles east of the Rigolets; here the wind failing, and the tide opposing him, he was obliged to come to anchor about 1 o'clock, A. M. At dawn the next morning the enemy's boats lay at anchor about nine miles from him, but soon got under way nearing him with their oars. The weather being perfectly calm, and a strong tide ahead, he knew he must be soon brought to action, and therefore calling his officers on board, signified his intention to make the most determined defence possible. He then proceeded to make the best disposition of his force, by forming a close line abreast, across the channel, anchored by the stern with springs on his cables; before 9 o'clock, he could distinctly count forty-two gun barges and launches, many of them mounting heavy caronades, and attended by three gigs, manned, as is believed, with an average of twenty men per boat; whilst the American flotilla, mounted only thirteen heavy and ten light guns, and was manned with one hundred and eighty-two men only. About half past nine, the enemy captured a small tender belonging to the American flotilla, which had fallen to leeward in the night and could not get up; and the whole then came too with their grapnels beyond the reach of Lieutenant Jones's cannon; here they formed an open line abreast, and at

Comparative strength of the two armaments.

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half past ten moved forward to the attack, steering directly for the American line.

Heroic resolution of Lieut. Jones.

How awful was this moment of suspense, when every man at his station anticipated the bloody scene, and anxiously expected the signal to engage; and how unequal the conflict, of eight boats and 140 men, against one small vessel with 36 men, for this was the proportion; without a hope of victory, Lieutenant Jones joined the combat, to support the character of his country, and sustain the honour of her flag. It was a manly, generous resolution, in which he was gallantly seconded by his officers and crews. Gun boats 156 and 162 commanded by Lieutenant Jones and Lieutenant Spedden, were drifted by the force of the current, about one hundred yards in advance of the line, and as soon as the enemy came within the range of round shot, their batteries were opened, but with little effect; at 10 minutes before 11 o'clock, the enemy opened his fire of cannon and small arms, the whole extent of his line, and then the action became warm, general and destructive; at 45 minutes after 11 o'clock, three launches attempted to board Lieutenant Jones, but were repulsed, having every officer and nearly every man killed or wounded, and two boats sunk; the attempt to board was soon repeated by four other launches, who were also repulsed with great slaughter; at this moment Lieutenant Jones received a severe wound in his left shoulder, which compelled him to leave the deck; the other gun vessels were engaged with equal desperation, but 156 being the commodore, the enemy's greatest efforts were directed against her. After Lieutenant Jones was wounded, the command devolved on his master's mate, Parker, who defended the vessel with great gallantry, until he was also severely wounded; but by repeated attacks of superior numbers, the enemy gained the deck, after a close action of one hour and twenty minutes; the battle still raged, and the enemy turned the guns of 156 on the other vessels, and in their confusion, several shot were fired before the United States flag was struck; a dominant force finally prevailed, and Lieutenant M'Kee-

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ver, at 40 minutes after 12 o'clock, struck his colours. The enemy acknowledged three midshipmen and 19 men killed, six officers, 3 master's mates, seven midshipmen and sixty-one men wounded; and Lieutenant Jones had six men killed, and eight officers, with twenty-seven men wounded, of whom nearly one-half was from his own vessel, as will appear from the following returns,* re-

* *List of killed and wounded on board a division of United States gun vessels, under the command of Lieutenant-commandant Thomas Ap Catesby Jones, in an engagement with a flotilla of English boats, near the Malheureuses Islands, on the 14th December*, 1814.

Names or Numbers of vessels.	Rank.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	Remarks.
Gun vessel, No. 5.	Seaman	1		1	
Gun vessel, No. 23.	Lieutenant		1		
	Midshipmen		2		One (Jas. Reynolds)
	Quarter-gunner		1		since dead.
	Carpenter's mate		1		Since dead.
	Seaman		1		
	Ordinary seamen		2		
				8	
Gun vessel, No. 156.	Lieutenant		1		
	Master's mate		1		
	Cook		1		
	Seamen		4		
	Ordinary seamen		4		
	Boys	1	1		
	Corporal of marines		1		
	Private marines	3	1		
				18	
Gun vessel, No. 162.	Lieutenant		1		
	Midshipman		1		
	Quarter-master		1		
	Quarter-gunner		1		
	Seaman		1		
	Ordinary seamen		2		
				7	
Gun vessel, No. 163.	Master's mate		1		
	Purser's steward		1		
	Seaman		1		
	Ordinary seamen	1	3		
				7	
Total		6	35	41	

THOMAS AP CATESBY JONES,
Commanding the Division.

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corded in honour of the action, which although not gilded with success, for conduct, courage and consequences, gave Lieutenant Jones a fair claim to distinction from his country.

Enemy determine to approach New Orleans by the Bayou Bien-venu.

Appalled by the fate of Captain Percy's expedition against Mobile point, and learning at Pensacola that the Petite Coquille was fortified, and the pass defended by gun vessels, the British commanders being advised at the same place, that the Bayou Bien-venu or Pescheurs, at the head of Lake Borgne, furnished a convenient approach to New Orleans, determined to make their descent by that creek;* which was well known as the high way for smugglers from Pensacola to New Orleans, at the time the British and Spanish governments held those places. But after the capture of the gun-vessels, the British officers expressed their determination to Lieutenant Jones, to attack Petite Coquille, and were very particular in their inquiries of him, respecting the strength of the place; he reported a garrison of 500 men, and forty pieces of artillery, which, if they were in earnest, probably deterred them from the undertaking. Be this as it may, the Bayou Bien-venu was reconnoitred on the 22d, and a debarkation of 2000 men under Major-general Keene, was effected on the morning of the 23d, at the bottom of General Villere's plantation, about two leagues from the city.

To this direction of the invaders, and their halt after they had reached the bank of the Mississippi, may, under God, be ascribed the salvation of New Orleans, and General Jackson's merited fame. By this approach, the enemy placed the American army in their front, leaving its rear open to every species of resource, and its flanks perfectly secured by the river and cypress swamps; a situation the most desirable to a military chief, because it enables him to condense his force, and disembarrass his mind of every care and every concern, but that of marshalling his men and preparing for battle. Yet as the enemy had,

* See Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane's letter to Mr. Croker, dated Armide, off Ile au Chat, Dec. 16, 1814.

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unperceived, got within two hour's march of the city, if they had proceeded directly forward, the advantages of General Jackson's position, which afterwards became all important, could not have availed him; because the enemy would have carried surprise with them, would have found the American corps dispersed,* without concert, and unprepared for combat; and making the attack with a superior† numerical force of disciplined troops, against a body composed chiefly of irregulars; under such circumstances, no soldier of experience will pause for a conclusion. The most heroic bravery would have proved unavailing, and the capital of Louisiana, with its millions of property, would have been lost. But blinded by confidence, beguiled by calculations injurious to the honour of the high-mettled patriot sons of Louisiana, and considering the game safe, they gave themselves up to security, took repose, and waited for reinforcements.

General Jackson resolves to advance and attack the enemy.

In the mean time General Jackson found himself reduced to the dilemma, of falling back and abandoning the city, waiting for the enemy in his position, or of advancing and attacking him. He had been surprised, and he justly anticipated that success only could protect the city and save his military reputation. By fighting he could but lose his life, and he might save all. Thus circumstanced, he had nothing but profit in view, and therefore the risk was a fair one. General Jackson did not hesitate; his resolution was taken, and his plan and the execution of it, would have done honour to the most experienced soldier of Europe.

The alarm of the enemy's proximity reached New Orleans after mid-day; their number uncertain; but about 2 o'clock, they were reported to be sixteen or eighteen hundred strong; and at half after two a detachment of about 550 men, composed of the 7th infantry, a party of marines, and twenty-two artillery men, with two field-

* See Latour, page 89.

† See General Jackson's letter to secretary of war, Dec. 29th, 1814. His whole force at that time did not exceed 3000 effectives.

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pieces, formed a line about a mile in advance of the city; the Tennesseans, encamped four miles in the rear, with Plauche's battalion, from the Bayou St. John's, and the free corps of the city were embodied, and the order of march and of battle arranged about 5 o'clock, P. M.; the navy, under Commodore Patterson, with characteristic ardour pressed for their share of the danger. General Jackson had previously infused his own spirit into this variegated corps; he had inspired them with entire confidence, and they waited his orders with assurance of victory. Darkness would mask his movement, and favour a surprise; it would also conceal his numbers, and mar the effects of the enemy's superior discipline: a night attack was therefore adopted, and considering the composition of his corps, it succeeded to admiration. The South Carolina, an armed schooner commanded by Commodore Patterson in person, was destined to co-operate with the troops, and she took her station with judgment and precision; but there seems to have been some failure of concert, occasioned probably by the unequal motion of the current and the column; the attack of the floating battery and the marching troops was not exactly simultaneous; but the surprise was complete. The schooner came to about 7 o'clock, and was discovered by the enemy and hailed several times, before she opened her fire (at half past 7 o'clock), which taking the enemy precisely in flank, enfiladed his encampment, and made havoc and confusion. The impression was most auspicious; and the alarm and distraction of the enemy were increased, when the fire of General Jackson's artillery and infantry commencing on the right and extending to the left, as the troops got to their stations, until the hardy sons of Tennessee, and the gallant rifle company of Capt. Beall,* led

* Rifles are good for little in the dark, because their effect depends on accurate vision and a distinct object, which, being destroyed, the excellence of the aim is impaired. The musket and bayonet, with buck-shot, is preferable, because in nocturnal affairs nothing decisive can take place but at close quarters.

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on by the dauntless Coffee, illumined the darkened plain with a sheet of flame, on the right flank and rear of their adversaries. Thus galled and harrassed, the enemy gave the strongest test of their discipline and valour, by not abandoning the field; and if General Jackson's troops had been formed in line, to embrace the front of the enemy, and could have been led to the charge, in the moment the Carolina opened her battery, he might have dispersed the enemy, and gained a complete victory; but this is a supposable case, scarcely practicable to irregular troops, under the cover of night, which produces disorder and favours cowardice.*

If it be difficult to convey to the human mind, any adequate description of contending battalions on a field of battle, in the glare of day, surely it is impossible to render justice to such scenes, under the obscurity of night. This combat may therefore be best described in a few words: it was a conflict of corps—a battle in pieces—where the friend was with difficulty distinguished from the foe, and ranks were intermingled pell-mell; and let it be recorded to the immortal honour of the American corps on this occasion, without derogating in the least from the glory of the chief, who planned and led the attack, that patriot zeal and personal courage supplied the defects of discipline, conduct and command.

The human mind is liable to extremes, which, depending on the passions, are uncontrollable by reason. This infirmity was strongly exemplified in the effects of the affair of the 23d Dec.; the confidence and security of the enemy, being suddenly changed into cautious apprehension and defensive preparations; whilst the American citizen rivalling the soldier, formed a just estimate of his own force, and by the example of his leader, was taught to spurn danger and contemn death. Whatever followed

* On this occasion two cowards only I understand were detected; one of them has been long distinguished; but their infirmities were shrouded in the transcendant glory of the corps, and the sympathy of President Madison was awakened—he retained them to grace his PEACE ESTABLISHMENT.

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in this memorable campaign was, on the part of the Americans, the effect of obvious circumstances; the chief judiciously selected the narrowest part of the plain, for the erection of his defences; and if they could boast neither design in the plan, nor skill in the execution, it was not his fault; the exigency was pressing, and the government had left him without an engineer, as well as without arms; but that Almighty Power, which watched over the destinies of Louisiana, favoured his exertions, and sent floods and frosts to co-operate with his labours. On the part of the enemy, apprehension, ignorance and obstinacy, appear alternately to have obscured his understanding and beguiled his judgment; the ground between Villere's plantation and New Orleans is an open plain, intersected with plantations, and the ordinary obstructions; the affair of the 23d terminated at half after nine o'clock,* about which hour the enemy received a reinforcement of 2,900 fresh men. Now supposing 400 men had been put "*hors de combat*" by the action, he still had a column left for duty, the morning of the 24th, of 4,500 men,† exceeding General Jackson's effective force 1,500; and if he had advanced on that or the following day, he would have brought the American army to action, or forced it to give up the town; and in open space, with such a disparity of force, moral and physical, he should have commanded victory, and must have prevailed. Fortunately, however, the enemy determined to continue on the defensive, and wait for reinforcements. He accordingly preserved his position until the 27th, when he moved forward and took ground about a mile in advance, where, with the exception of a feint and a reconnoissance, some affairs of pickets and heavy cannonades, he remained until the 8th of January; allowing General Jackson time to receive reinforcements, and complete a strong line of defence, with a deep wet ditch from the river to the Cypress swamp, which he had lined with batteries. On this memorable day, Sir Edward Packenham, disdaining to

* Latour, p. 100.

† Latour, p. 104

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avail himself of local circumstances or to profit by professional skill, determined to carry New Orleans at the point of the bayonet in the face of day, exposing himself to showers of cannister from 18 pounders,* and triple ranks of infantry and riflemen. It was the scene of Ticonderoga acted over again. He was slaughtered and repulsed; and as the whole operations were confined, to the perpendicular march of columns against a straight line, defended by stationary batteries and battalions, the subject requires no further elucidation; except that the passive resolution of the American citizen, vanquished the active courage of the British veteran. The transition from blind confidence to timid irresolution was instantaneous—panic succeeded defeat—and a veteran army of three-fold numbers precipitately retreated before General Jackson's undisciplined force, leaving their battering artillery behind them.†

* The battery of Lieutenant Spots rendered the most signal service on that day. This promising young officer was opposed to the centre of the enemy's right column, against which he discharged 18 pound cannister with dreadful effect.

† Whilst I record the misfortunes of an enemy, I take pleasure in rescuing the memory of the man, from that unmerited reproach to which the hostile feelings of the moment, and the ignorance of his personal character, had exposed it; and for this purpose I insert the following account of Major-general the Hon. Sir Edward Packenham, received from an officer who served with him on several occasions, and who knew him from the time he was a major of the 23d light dragoons, to the day of his embarkation for this country. "This unfortunate but gallant officer, was the son of the late, and brother of the present, Earl of Longford, and brother-in-law of the Duke of Wellington, who married his sister. In the war with France which succeeded the short peace, whilst leading the 64th regiment of foot, of which he was lieutenant-colonel, to the successful assault of the fortress of *Morne Fortunée*, in the island of St. Lucia, he was badly wounded, a musket ball passing through his neck; and on the expedition which afterwards subjected the island of Martinique to the British arms, he was again badly wounded in the same part, whilst storming the batteries of *Isle des Ramiers*, in Fort Royal bay, at the head of the 7th regiment of fusileers. During the war in the peninsula, he distinguished himself on various occasions, but particularly at the battle of Salamanca, or *Los Arapiles*, where he commanded a division: he was

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Inscrutable are the ways of Providence! but manifest and manifold his divine interposition in favour of the people of these states.

Pending the momentous scenes in the vicinity of New Orleans, which filled every bosom with solicitude; the zeal and patriotism displayed by all ranks in Louisiana, from the ill fated Helot to the most distinguished characters, has rarely been equalled in modern times, and would have reflected honour on ancient Rome, in her most virtuous days. The fearful feeble sex, which constitute man's chief happiness and care, merging the tenderest affections of the soul, in the enthusiastic love of country, were beheld inciting the dearest relations of life to deeds of arms, and animating the zeal of the zealous. From the earliest warning of the enemy's approach, Governor Claiborne displayed that integrity of attachment to his country, for which he is not excelled, by precepts, example and exertions the most praiseworthy; and as the storm increased, he sacrificed his self love to the public cause, and descended from the dignified station of the chief magistrate of a sovereign state, to receive the orders of a subordinate military commander.

This sacrifice was necessary to the concert, harmony and effect of the depending operations; but it was not the less meritorious, because of the necessity; and the legislature happening to be in session, all the powers of the

afterwards appointed adjutant-general to the allied army, under the Duke of Wellington, in which station he also greatly signalised himself, attracting on all occasions, by his amiable and conciliatory conduct, the esteem and regard of his brother officers of every rank. He was a gentleman of the most pleasing and accomplished manners, and of exquisite humour; his mind was lofty, liberal, and generous in the extreme, and charity was the characteristic of his heart. To this last trait, the widows and orphans of the soldiers of the 7th and 64th regiment will bear grateful testimony. Though high in military rank, he had not reached the prime of life, and at the time of his death, there was not a more deservedly popular officer in the British service." Although it must be a matter of just pride to American soldiers, to have defeated such a leader, no nation can furnish heroes more ready, than Americans, to render justice to the merits of a fallen foe.

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state, and the municipal authorities of the capital, in fine the general, local, and personal property of the country, with the blood and lives of the citizens were devoted to the public cause, and placed at the disposal of the general; the deposit was a safe one, and the result warranted the universal confidence. But amidst this general impulse of patriotism, it is deeply to be regretted that measures should have taken place, which prostrated the sovereignty of an integral member of the federal pact; and, if not marked by some demonstration of public sentiment to interdict the repetition, may be recurred to at a future day, to trample under foot the civil rights of this nation.

Writing as I am, not with views to fame or popularity, or patronage, but, merely to rescue my reputation from the multiplied wrongs which injustice has heaped upon it; and to impart to my fellow citizens, the results of my observation, experience and information, during a life spent in the public service; I avail myself of the right, of a free and independent citizen, *recently acquired*, to discharge a sacred duty to my contemporaries and posterity; by calling the public attention to the transactions I allude to, which have been neglected and passed over in silence, by the legitimate guardians of the palladium of our liberties. In great emergencies which threaten the vital interests of the state, and when the ordinary course of the law is found inadequate to the repression of the menaced evils, it may become *expedient* to anticipate the laws, and defend the public safety, by the agency of extraordinary measures.

But as expediency is a common hack, resorted to by tyrants and innovators, whereon to found precedents and ultimately establish arbitrary laws, the smallest encroachment on a constitutional right, should be regarded with extreme jealousy. If then the constitution has been grossly and repeatedly violated at New Orleans, during the campaign 1814—15, a substantial injury has been offered to the whole union; and although it may be justified by the "*law of imperious necessity*," A LAW, at

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the mention of which, all freemen should be on the alert! yet this "imperious necessity" should be circumstantially and critically proved to have existed; or it will become in this country, as it has already in many European states, the watchword of men in power, to subvert the liberties of the people, to defeat the laws, and to countenance every sanguinary and despotic act. If, however, upon the investigation of the particular case, the offence and the justification were both proved to exist, an act of amnesty should have passed the legislature; to discountenance the violation, and to nip the precedent in the bud, by shewing the necessity of legislative pardon, however strong the justification adduced; for expediency yesterday, may become precedent to-day, and law to-morrow. If the rights of a free people are not watched with the eyes of Argus, the law of "*imperious necessity*" will become to the American, what the *lex majestatis* proved to the Roman citizens; which, although originally made for the preservation of the majesty of the Roman people, yet being warped by the emperors to their own use, it became the instrument by which the majesty of the people was annihilated.

Such a legislative procedure, whilst it shielded the constitution from violence, would have solemnly forbid a repetition of the offence, on less justifiable pretences; and instead of impairing the fame of General Jackson, would have formed an honourable record of his services; but the profound silence of the state and general government on these transactions, may be interpreted to sanction the precedent, which ought to have been destroyed, because dangerous in its tendency. With this view of the case, I sincerely hope that the ensuing Congress, may not consider the subject too unimportant for their attention, and that they may adopt some suitable application, to cleanse and cure the wounds inflicted on the constitution, without diminishing the splendour of military glory drawn from the cannon's mouth.

In reviewing my whole conduct, from the moment I was ordered for command to New Orleans, in March,

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1812, until my recal in June, 1813, I am satisfied with it, and have received the award of an approving conscience; my zeal and my industry are recorded in the bosoms of the *good* citizens of Louisiana, and the works which I founded are durable and speak for themselves. But if we take a retrospect of the conduct of President Madison and his counsellors, what may be said? that with wilful blindness and incorrigible obstinacy they withheld every means, embarrassed every measure, and marred every proposition for the safety of New Orleans.

I turn from this humiliating contrast, to a subject which must excite the abhorrence of every honest man. An article appeared in a public print* the 2d May, 1815, designed to affect a judicial decision, which interested my character; the manner and the matter of this production, proclaim it to be from the pen of a quondam minister of Mr. Madison's confidence, which gives it a title to respect; and for this reason, I extract from it, and submit to the public the following paragraph, which if well founded, would open to the American community, a new source of corrupt intrigue and secret persecution, from which the eye and the mind would revolt with horror; and against which, neither honour, nor innocence, nor patriotism, nor public services, could protect the most faithful officer, under the reign of a temporising, timid, dishonourable and *dishonoured* chief magistrate.

"New Orleans," says the Argus, "was deemed the key of the south-western country, it was not believed to be safe in the General's (Wilkinson's) keeping, and an order for his removal was accordingly given, by the highest authority known to the laws and the constitution; for the correctness of the statement we appeal to the present secretary of war, Mr. Crawford, to his quondam colleague, Mr. Tait, to Mr. Clay of Kentucky, and lastly, to Messrs. Brown and Fromentin, senators of the United States, from the state of Louisiana. These gentlemen have too much honour to deny their agency in producing this order, and too much wisdom

* Albany Argus.

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to regret its consequences to their section of the union." Thus, if faith be placed in this ascription of President Madison's quondam director, it would appear that a dark and secret cabal at the seat of government, composed of *four senators* of the United States, the *Speaker* of the House of Representatives, and *President* Madison, with his faithful *coadjutor*, were plotting my disgrace, while the citizens of Louisiana and of the Mississippi territory approved my exertions for their safety, and were rejoicing in the direction of my plans and labours for their defence; those labours and designs that, in spite of the distortions of jealousy or envy, hatred or malice, laid the foundation on which Gen. Jackson was enabled to defend New Orleans and establish his well earned fame. I appeal for these facts to the evidences which have been premised, and to every *honourable* man in Louisiana and the Mississippi territory; to Forts Bowyer and St. Philip which spoke in thunder, and to the Petite Coquille, whose name alone saved the city and General Jackson's army; nay, were it necessary, I could establish the efficiency of my plans and designs, by the subsequent measures of Gen. Jackson himself, who, acting like a soldier, did not reject what he saw good, and trod in my footsteps; how could it be otherwise? he, a perfect stranger to the theatre, which I had been examining for twenty years; but whatever may have been the personal animosities, of Mr. Crawford, Mr. Tait, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Fromentin and Mr. Brown, the imputation is of too foul a character to be credited. It seems impossible that men in the most humble, vulgar walk of life, who had not made villany a regular profession, should have entered into such a league, against the character and fortunes of a military officer, who had served his country with zeal and fidelity, from the dawn of the revolution; much less can it be believed, that gentlemen, who could boast a long lineage of distinguished ancestry—gentlemen, born, bred and educated, to occupy and adorn the first ranks of society—gentlemen of senatorial dignity, whose lofty minds and high aspirations, would seem to place them above vulgar

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prejudices and invidious personalities, could have entered into so base and infamous a conspiracy against a fellow citizen.

There are also several strong circumstances, which have a tendency to invalidate the horrible charge. I had been trusted with the command of our western frontier posts, from the Ohio to New Orleans, during the most critical exigencies of our public affairs, by General Washington, President Adams, President Jefferson, and by President Madison twice, in the face of war; to say then, that I was recalled because "*New Orleans was not deemed safe in my keeping*," after more than twenty years experience, of faithful, zealous and successful service, would be a reproach to these several distinguished characters, who have occupied the presidential chair, from the most exalted to the *last* and the *least* of them all. There is another circumstance irresistible in its opposition to the credibility of this ministerial pasquinade, and that is an order from the war department of May 22d, 1813, directing me to continue in the very command "*until further orders*," from which, according to the Argus, I had been recalled, "*because New Orleans was not deemed safe in my keeping*." But the strongest objection of all, to the veracity of this unmerited imputation, appears to me to be the circumstance of my being relieved by Brigadier-general Flournoy, a gentleman for whom I conceived and cherished a high respect, but who, although particularly esteemed by Messrs. Crawford and Tait, and in other respects my superior, had just entered his noviciate as a military officer, and was a perfect stranger to the country, its topography or resources, and to every species of military detail. It is repugnant to common reason, to suppose that the country could be safer in the hands of an officer thus unqualified and uninformed, than those of one who had made the theatre his study for twenty years.

If other motives than those of public duty produced my recal, I hope the vindictive spirit of the authors of it, have been gratified by President Madison; and leaving them to the enjoyment of their triumph. I sincerely

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hope they may never experience the cruelty and injustice they have offered to me.

Duty to a most respectable part of my ancient companions in arms, obliges me in this place to correct certain prejudices, which have sprung out of insidious misrepresentations or selfish policy. After the late peace, those who had been opposed to the war, and were unwilling to allow President Madison and his administration any credit for the conduct of it, continued to expose the blunders and misfortunes which marked its commencement and its progress; whilst the advocates of the war, and the partisans of the administration, endeavoured to palliate the improvidence of the declaration, in the unprepared state of the country, and to excuse the temporising, feeble, fluctuating expedients with which they supported it; by censuring the conduct of certain officers of their own creation, and disparaging the merits of the old corps, which formed the military establishment, anterior to the declaration of war; not knowing that war is a trade, the perfection of which is not to be acquired in peace, although both the French and British armies furnished abundant testimony to the fact, at the opening of the late 25 years European war; and forgetting that the corps of engineers, and the Generals Pike, Covington, Macomb, Gaines and Scott, with seven out of ten colonels composing the present peace establishment, were all *elèves* of that school; they should also have reflected, that the President, with his deputy commander, the secretary of war, who held the supreme controul of the military, and it must not be denied, were admirably fitted for the station, were responsible for the formation, discipline, and conduct of those corps; yet, censure more undeserved was never levelled at a body of men; for if I may judge from what I see and hear, and know, the principles of duty and of service were more correctly understood, and more uniformly, consistently, and strictly enforced then, than at any subsequent period; and when put to the test, those corps have never failed to distinguish themselves.

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It is, however, due to truth and to self-justice, that I should acknowledge the difficulties and embarrassments, I experienced during my command, under President Madison. If the reins of subordination and discipline were not as well braced as they ought to have been at that period, it was not my fault, but that of the chief magistrate and his advisers. In 1812, President Madison could not be prevailed on to exert his prerogative against an officer under my command, a favourite at the palace,* notwithstanding the broadest proofs of flagitious conduct were placed before him, on the records of a military tribunal. But in 1813—14, he was wound up to a pitch of cruelty and injustice without a parallel,† and dismissed scores of officers on the mere report of legalized spies and secret informers.

Whilst on the topic of official abuses, I shall select from many instances of the violation of the constitution, by President Madison, one of which it would be a misprision of treason against my country to conceal; I was urged by a minister of Mr. Madison's happy selection, *not to publish this transaction*, because it smells of blood, and I think I replied, your president's salary shall not prevent me. If a President of the United States may, *after deliberation*, be permitted to sanction murder, what is to prevent his committing it? And if the lives of the soldiery are placed at his disposal, how long will those of the citizens be safe? This is a case too serious in its nature to be brought before the public on slight grounds. But it interests the high and the low, the rich

* At a future time this, and a variety of precious intrigues of the same mansion, shall be exposed to a credulous community, as a warning to female interference in the affairs of government. I will shew how ministers were appalled and senators were startled.

† See the case of Brigadier-general Smyth, an officer of his choice, whom he condemned without a hearing, and by a side wind, the prostitution of law, dismissed him the service.

See also, the infamous, brutal treatment of Captain Joseph Treat, countenanced by his silence.—Appendix, No. V.

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and the poor, the whole people of the United States, that those who made the constitution under which they live (who, I most fervently hope, may restore the administration of it to its native purity, and protect it for ages by their vigilance, and their virtue,) may be warned of the abuses and excesses of the public servants. My judgment deceives me, and I am badly advised, if the following documents will not support the case of the illegal execution of a soldier, sanctioned by President Madison, after due deliberation, in the face of the constitution and the laws.

"*Adjutant & Inspector General's Office,*

Washington, 29th Jan. 1814.

"Sir,

"I am instructed by the secretary of war, to inform you, that the proceedings of a court martial held at Greenbush, by your order of the 21st July, 1813, and before which were tried Lieutenants Cobb, Blanvelt and Curtis, *are illegal, as you had no authority at that time to institute general courts martial.* I am further directed to say, that you are hereby authorised* to order a general court martial, for the trial of the above named officers, the proceedings of which must be transmitted to the secretary of war for his decision.

"I have the honour to be,
"Very respectfully, Sir,
"Your obedient servant,
"J. B. WALBACH,
Adjutant General.

"*Colonel Simon Larned, Greenbush.*"

* The authority vesting officers with powers to institute general courts martial, is delegated by law in the 65th article of the rules and articles for the government of the armies of the United States, and is not submitted to the President; therefore, this authorization was an usurpation.

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"*Cantonment, Greenbush, 9th Feb.* 1814.

"Sir,

"I had the honour to receive your favour of the 29th ult. by which I am informed the proceedings of the court martial ordered by me in July last, are illegal; a doctrine new to me; and as far as I have erred, it has been in pursuing the *practice of my superiors.** While General Chandler was at Burlington, Colonel Pike (afterwards General Pike) at Plattsburgh, each ordered general courts martial, approved or disapproved the sentences, and carried them into execution; General Dearborn at the same time commanded at Greenbush. Some officers above my rank, passed through Albany in the course of the summer, without my knowledge, none giving me any orders. When General Hampton passed through Albany, on his way to the frontiers, he refused to give me orders on any subject. This being a kind of deposit for all sick, invalids, rogues, and deserters, the latter increased upon me to an alarming degree. I appointed general courts martial, approved and disapproved their sentences, and carried them into effect, one man only was shot for repeated desertion, according to the sentence of the court. In all this, I not only conceived I was doing my duty but a service to my country. It seems, however, I misjudged. On the receipt of your letter of the 12th ultimo. I immediately wrote to General Wilkinson by an express, but I have received no answer. Our numbers now in the provost-guard for capital crimes, are about forty and daily increasing. It is often attended with some difficulty to assemble officers in this vicinity sufficient to form a general court martial.

"It would be useless for me to attempt the enumeration of evils, resulting from an unqualified decision, of the illegality of those general courts martial which were ordered by me. Those under sentence must be released, and I left to make my peace with them.

* This evinces the danger of precedent and the necessity of nipping it in the bud.

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"The charge of murder for the one who was shot, would be in active circulation immediately. Lieutenant Curtis was sentenced to be suspended from his command three months, which time has some months since expired and he is now here doing duty. Lieutenants Cobb and Blanvelt could not receive a new trial upon the merits of their charges, as many of the material witnesses are not here, or within my controul. Could the government so far sanction or confirm what is past, as to do away those evils? I have no wish to ask or usurp any power not confided to me; an immediate answer would be very acceptable.

"I have the honour to be,
"With sentiments of respect,
"Your obedient servant,
"S. LARNED,
Col. 9th Com'g.

"Colonel J. B. Walbach, Adj. Gen."

"*Adjutant & Inspector General's Office,*
Washington, 9th March, 1814.

"Sir,

"Your letter of the 9th February has been received, and submitted to the secretary of war, by whose direction, I inform you, that the President has decided, that Greenbush be considered *a separate command,* so far as relates to *courts martial hitherto held.* This decision, you will observe, is a *confirmation of the several sentences of general courts martial,* held under your orders, and will render unnecessary, any further proceedings in the cases of Lieutenants Cobb, Blanvelt and others.

"I am, Sir,
"Your obedient servant,
"J. B. WALBACH,
Adjutant General.

"Colonel S. Larned, Com'g. Greenbush,
State of New York."

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"*Albany*, 12*th March*, 1814.

"Sir,

"Lieutenants Cobb and Blauvelt having become entitled to a new trial by the decision of the war department, I had made some exertions to summon a new court martial, but found it impracticable, until the trial of General Hull should be near a close; previous to which I was relieved from my command at Greenbush, which leaves Lieutenant Cobb there, and puts it out of my power to proceed. Lieutenant Blauvelt hath not made his appearance, or given me any information where he is. I have thought it my duty to state the above facts to the department of war.

"I am, with great respect,

"Your obedient servant,

"S. LARNED, *Col. 9th Inf.*

"*Colonel Walbach, Adj. Gen.*"

"*Troy, March 2d*, 1815.

"Sir,

"In reply to your letter of this date, I have the honour to inform you that I was a member of a general court martial of which Lieutenant-colonel Young was president, ordered at Greenbush by Colonel Larned, in July, 1813, at which Lieutenant Cobb of the light artillery, and Lieutenant Blauvelt of the 13th infantry, were dismissed the service. Lieutenant Curtis of the 15th infantry, suspended for a limited time, and Samuel Helms, a private (of what regiment I do not recollect) sentenced to be shot for desertion, all of which sentences were approved of by the commanding officer, and carried into execution. Not having papers with me by which I can refresh my memory, I am unable to give you the precise dates, but I know the sentences were approved and promulgated immediately after the proceedings were handed

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over by the judge advocate. Helms was executed in the latter part of August or the first part of September following. I was officer of the day, and superintended his execution.

"By the same court many other soldiers were tried and sentenced to various punishments, but my recollection is not sufficient to enable me to particularise them.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,
"Your most obedient servant,
"ASA B. SIZER,
Major, 29th Infantry.

"*Major-general Wilkinson.*"

The facts are before the people, who will decide on their merits, and if Lieutenants Cobb and Blauvelt were not illegally dishonoured, and the life of Samuel Helms unlawfully taken, then I shall acknowledge my error, and make every reparation to the accused.

I trust it will not be improper for me to close this chapter, with the flattering testimonial from the man, who has been deservedly styled THE FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY.

"*United States, April 2d, 1794.*

"Sir,

"I have received the letter you addressed to me, accompanied by a new map of the present theatre of war, north-west of the Ohio, which I consider as the best description extant of the country to which it relates.

"The value of the object is greatly enhanced in my estimation, by its being the production of the officer second in command of the American legion.

"This desire of being useful, in the highest degree, to the service in which you are employed, affords me great satisfaction; nothing should have prevented my having had it published but an apprehension, that an improper

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use may be made of the information it contains, in this apparently eventful moment. This apprehension, however, may be obviated at a future period. CHAP. XII.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obed't. humble serv't.

"GO. WASHINGTON.

"*Brigadier-general Wilkinson.*"

The following letters should have been inserted at page 546, but were accidently omitted, they bear testimony to the point of attack preferred by the enemy, and shew that the fortification of the Petite Coquille prevented the invasion of New Orleans by Lake Pontchartrain; I hold them of sufficient importance to be inserted in this place, and refer my reader back for the application.

Extract of a letter from Lieutenant-commandant Jones, of the navy, to General James Wilkinson, dated August 16th, 1815.

"After the capture of the gun boats which I commanded in the Malheureux pass, on the 14th of last December, I was taken on board the enemy's fleet at Ship Island, many interrogatories were put to me relative to the defences of New Orleans, and particularly that of the *Petite Coquille*, which post the enemy were then preparing to attack by lightening several of his gun brigs, dismounting their carronades and mounting from 4 to 6 long 18 pounders in each vessel, for the purpose of battering. The enemy considered the capture of our gun boats, an event of much importance to the success of his contemplated attack on the Coquille, the reduction of which he considered a "*sine qua non*" to his ulterior operations; since the defeat of the British at New Orleans, some of their officers have declared, that the want of a correct knowledge of the strength and position of the works at the Coquille, was all that prevented the attack as first contemplated; and that the information given them by a spy, who was sent to reconnoitre the post, fell so far short of

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what they conceived, so important to the defence of New Orleans, and differed so widely from the accounts given by the officers and men, who were captured in the gun boats, whose accounts corroborated each other; as well as some corresponding letters of officers and men, which fell into the enemy's hands; as to create in the enemy a want of confidence in the fidelity of his spy, who, I believe was dismissed from his employment on that occasion."

"*Philadelphia, 8th December*, 1815.

"Dear Sir,

"As well as I can now recollect, it was about the 27th or 28th January, 1815, that I spent a night on board the vessel on which Commodore Lockyer hoisted his flag, near the eastern mouth of the River Pearl, on my way to the British fleet, which then lay near the North Chandeliers, for the purpose of exchanging prisoners. During much conversation which I had with the Commodore, and Captain Gordon of the Seahorse frigate, I inquired why the attack on New Orleans was not made by the way of Lake Pontchartrain, their answer was, "*that they were afraid of risking an attack on the post of Petite Coquille.*" I had been at Coquille for the benefit of my health, a short time before the gun boats were taken, it was then in the situation you left it, open in the rear and lower side; General Jackson had not then arrived at New Orleans.

"With great respect,

"WILLIAM FLOOD.

"*Major-general Wilkinson.*"

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CHAPTER XIII.

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Reflections on the conduct of President Madison at the commencement of the war.—Loss of Michilimackinac.—Consequences considered.—Extract of letters from Wilkinson to the secretary of war; from Lieutenant Hancks, late commandant at Michilimackinac, to General Hull; and from Sir George Prevost to Earl Bathurst.—A glance at General Harrison's military career.—Reflections thereon.—Military movements on the frontiers of the state of New York.—A body of militia of that state called into service under the command of Major-general Van Rensselaer.—Colonel Van Rensselaer's project against Prescott.—Assembly of troops on the strait of Niagara.—General Van Rensselaer meditates an attack on Queenstown and Fort George.—His letter to General Dearborn on that subject, Oct. 8th, 1816.—Judgment displayed in the proposed plan of attack.—Affair of Queenstown under Col. Van Rensselaer.—Account of killed and wounded officers.—Victory obtained, but afterwards lost by the defection of the militia.—Captain Wool's letter.—Reflections on the affair at Queenstown.—Movement of the enemy from Fort George.—Conduct of President Madison.—Consequences of that affair.—What ought to have been the conduct of the American troops.—Reflections on General Van Rensselaer's conduct and that of the militia.—Objects of the armament and return of troops.—General Van Rensselaer resigns his command, and is succeeded by Brig. Gen. Smyth.—The conduct of the latter glanced at, and his maltreatment by President Madison exposed.—The affair of Sackett's Harbour.—The conduct of General Brown and the militia.—Landing of the enemy, and combat with a detachment of regular recruits, under Lieutenant-colonel Backus and Major Aspinwall.—The enemy are repulsed with loss, and retreat.—Return of the detachment of regulars.

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—Reflections on this incident, and the conduct of the President.—General Brown rewarded for the services of others.—Return of killed and wounded.—Situation of the northern army in August, 1813, adverted to.—Wilkinson's motives for taking the command, and determination not to outlive misfortune.—His afflictions and disappointment.—Wretched condition of the troops in point of health unknown to him.—Troops reach French Mills.—Cordon of posts under a Canadian winter.—Certain developements proposed.—British deserters and subjects taken in our ranks.—Pretensions of the enemy.—Conduct of General Dearborn.—Correspondence which ensued.—Termination of that affair.—Project of an enterprise against the British post of Prescott.—Orders to General Brown, and a letter to the secretary of war.—Communications to the secretary of war, and with Governor Tompkins.—Governor Tompkins and Colonel Scott.—Singular letter to the General, imputed to Governor Tompkins and published in the city of New York.—Reflections thereon.

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Reflections on the conduct of President Madison, at the commencement of the war of 1812.

WAR once resolved on by President Madison, it became his duty, before he made the declaration, to ascertain his resources, the number, condition, and discipline of his forces, and the talents and experience of those who were to lead his armies; to settle the plan on which it should be conducted, whether offensively or defensively, and to have concerted his measures accordingly. At the same time, he should have ascertained precisely the number, disposition, and defences of the enemy; and having determined on his points of attack, he should have taken the necessary means to concentrate such a force as would have insured success. No danger could have arisen out of delay, *except to his re-election;* and at all events, he should have possessed himself of the most exact topographical knowledge of the theatre, on which he might be eventually engaged. He should have anticipated probable consequences and been prepared for them, by putting his exposed frontier posts in a state of security; he should have accumulated, at convenient depots, mu-

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nitions of war, battering and field trains, transport and provisions, and all the necessary attirail of armies; and, above all, he should have kept his resolution so perfectly disguised, as to have concealed it effectually from the adverse power. Being thus prepared, war should have been declared, and the enemy might have been swept from every occupancy* in Canada, during the first campaign. But what was the conduct of the chief magistrate and his counsellors? Were their measures adapted to the exigency they had produced? Were their plans calculated to anticipate the natural and necessary movements of the enemy? How deplorably different was the course pursued! After the country was committed to the calamities of war, and he had *secured his re-election*, President Madison contented himself with attempts to induce the enemy to negociate, and the display of injudicious projects, blustering pretensions and temporising expedients; leaving the country, generally, to its fate, for the first nine months, without a single act of salutary provision, or a solitary measure of judicious precaution.† This improvidence of our public counsels, laid the foundation of irrecoverable evils, and the late war was distinguished from its commencement to its termination, by a succession of misfortunes, as far as

* I include Quebec, on the presumption the garrison would have been ordered to the defence of Montreal, and have been there captured.

† The connivance of the executive with the committees of Congress, on this occasion, shewed the dangers to which the rights of a nation may be exposed, by a perversion of the powers and a disregard of the duties, of the executive and legislative departments. When the estimates for the military establishment were presented to Congress, and referred to the committee of ways and means, the minister of war, proposed to reduce the estimate to half the amount actually necessary, *in order to secure popularity*; and the committee and both houses of Congress acquiesced in the imposition; those who were in the secret were silent, and those who were not, either knew so little of their duty or paid so little attention to it, that the law passed to reduce; and the consequence was seen in the miseries and sufferings on the frontier, and the failure of many practicable enterprises.

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they could be produced, by the errors and neglects of the executive, of which the loss of Michilimackinac formed the chef d'œuvre.

When some able historian shall hereafter undertake to record a circumstantial, and connected narrative of this epoch of the American history; wherein the agencies, intrigues and interests which produced the war, and the operations and effects which ensued, shall be carefully traced and impartially developed; it will hardly be credited, that after he had determined on hostilities, President Madison should have been so negligent, or so ignorant of his duty to the state as to permit his antagonist, who was unapprised of his intention, to strike the first blow; and take from him the most critical, commanding, and important post of the interior frontier; yet it will be impossible to deny the fact, or palliate the disgrace, which stands unrivalled but by the battle of Bladensburgh.

It is difficult to account for this misfortune, without implicating the integrity of the cabinet, on any ground unconnected with the supposition, that the executive and his minister were entirely forgetful of the existence of such a post, and its occupancy by the troops of the United States; since the garrison could have been reinforced, and equipt for offensive operations, without exciting suspicions or alarm; and by the seasonable provision of relay horses and confidential expresses, with suitable water craft at Detroit or at St. Joseph's river of Lake Michigan, the declaration of war might have been transmitted from the seat of government to Michilimackinac in ten days. The British post of St. Joseph's might then have been surprised and captured, and the Indians ever ready to join the strongest party, would have sided with us; Malden would have fallen without a struggle, the country would have risen in our behalf, the enemy would have been driven back upon Fort George, and millions of property, thousands of lives and the honour of our arms would have been saved. But by the blind negligence of the executive, and the imprudence or treachery of a confidant, the enemy were enabled to anticipate his

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Loss of Michilimackinac.

intelligence in the north, and, oh shame! the commanding officer of St. Joseph announces the declaration of war to Lieutenant Hancks at Michilimackinac, and takes the place by surprise. The Indians being now assured of protection, indulge their natural animosity, join the standard of the enemy in hordes, descend the waters and attack us in front, flank and rear; the war is transferred to our own territory, the capital of the frontier is taken, our country is invaded, battles are fought, and a cruel warfare is kept up in that quarter, with varied success, for more than a year, at the expense of much blood and many millions. These facts require no illustration, they are fresh in every person's memory, but the following extracts from my letter to the secretary of war, and of Lieutenant Hancks's and Sir George Prevost's to their superiors, will evince my disapprobation of the conduct of the war, will expose the criminal neglect of President Madison, and establish the justice of my deductions, founded on the catastrophe of Michilimackinac.*

Extract of a letter from General Wilkinson to the secretary of war, dated New Orleans, May 23d, 1813.

"In the mean time, I beg you to understand, that with my lights on the subject, I disapprove of every step, which has been taken against the Canadas, and it will be difficult to get right, however plain the road."

* The fact that the enemy was apprised of the declaration of war at Malden, nine days before our post at Detroit, is unquestionable; and it has been repeatedly and publicly declared, without any attempt to refute the fact, that a letter bearing the signature of a minister of the cabinet was for a time arrested in the post office at Detroit, which had been brought to that place by an express or by mail, from a merchant in one of our seaport cities; this letter is stated to have been exhibited to a brave officer, then, it is believed, in command at that post, Colonel Jesup, who seeing the signature of a minister, considered himself as bound to respect it. The name of Colonel Jesup is not used with his knowledge, nor privacy, nor has the author ever conversed with him on the subject; but from a reliance on his known honour, that he would contradict it, if the facts be not true. Mr. Abbot, the post master at Detroit, Captain Duggan, of the quarter-master's department, and many others, it is said, saw the letter.

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Extract of a letter from Lieutenant Hancks, late commandant of Michilimackinac, to General Hull, dated Detroit, August 4th, 1812.

"Sir,

"I take the earliest opportunity to acquaint your excellency, of the surrender of the garrison of Michilimackinac under my command, to his Britannic Majesty's forces under the command of Captain Charles Roberts, on the 17th ultimo. On the 16th, I was informed that several nations of Indians then at St. Joseph, and a British detachment, distant 45 miles, intended to make an immediate attack on Michilimackinac, I accordingly despatched Captain Daurman to St. Joseph's, to watch the Indians; he embarked about sunset and met the British forces within 10 or 15 miles of the island, by whom he was made prisoner, and put on his parole of honour. He was landed on the island at day-break, with positive orders to give no intelligence whatever; he was also instructed to take the inhabitants of the village, indiscriminately, to a place on the west side of the island, where their persons, and property, would be protected by a British guard, but should they go to the fort, they would be subject to a general massacre by the savages, which would be inevitable, if the garrison fired a gun. This information I received from Doctor Day, who was passing through the village, when every person was flying for refuge to the enemy. Immediately on being informed of the approach of the enemy, I placed ammunition, &c. in the block houses, ordered every gun to be charged, and every preparation for action. About 9 o'clock, I could discover, that the enemy were in possession of the heights* that commanded the fort, and one piece of their artillery directed to the most defenceless part of the garrison. The Indians at this time were to be seen at the edge of the woods. At half past 11 o'clock, the enemy sent in a

* The occupancy of this position, the author recommended in his memoir in 1799, and several times since.

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flag of truce, demanding a surrender of the fort and island, to his Britannic Majesty's forces. *This, Sir, was the first information I had of the declaration of war;* I had however anticipated it, and was as well prepared to meet such an event, as I possibly could have been with the force under my command, amounting to 57 effective men including officers."

Extract of a letter from Lieutenant-general Sir George Prevost to Earl Bathurst, secretary of state, for war, &c. dated Montreal, 26th August, 1816.

"In these measures he was most opportunely aided by the fortunate surrender of Fort Michilimackinac, which, giving spirit and confidence to the Indian tribes in its neighbourhood, part of whom assisted in its capture, determined them to advance upon the rear and flanks of the American army, as soon as they heard it had entered the province."

A glance at General Harrison's military career.

Before I step from this theatre of war, it is due to truth and justice, and may furnish a useful lesson to the youth of military aspirations, that I should take a glance at General Harrison's career. The distinction acquired in the vigorous affair of Tippicanoe,* and in the obstinate, gallant and triumphant defence of Fort Meigs, were consecrated by the capture and dispersion of General Proctor's army; the death of the formidable Indian commander Tecumseh; and the subjection of the savage hordes, who had contributed essentially to stain the honour of the American arms, which was thus wiped off by the humiliation of the confederate band, that had infested our north-western frontier. Yet these meritorious military services, after having received the plaudits of the giddy multitude, and more than once extorted the parsimonious praise of President Madison, could not protect their author against congressional intrigues and ministerial jealousy; and President Madison

* I destroyed this Indian emporium in 1791, with a corps of 350 militia from Kentucky.

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calmly beheld the officer, whom he had deservedly eulogised, thrust out of the service by the usurpations of his war minister, to which it would have been dishonourable to submit. Such apathy and indifference to the feelings and honour of those he was bound to protect, was enough to have chilled ardour, repressed honourable emulation, and palsied the exertions of patriotism. Thank God, we have passed the painful crisis; and let it be hoped, that the demoralizing system which has so severely afflicted the body politic, will terminate with the power of its patron.

If my reader will accompany me down Lake Erie to the straits of Niagara, the same scenes of executive ignorance and imbecility will be presented to him. We shall there find a heterogeneous assemblage of citizens and soldiers of various denominations, from the unrestrained volunteer to the regular recruit for five years, without organization of any kind, commanded by gentlemen who had to learn their duty; and unprovided with the munitions of war, even to the indispensable article of provisions. From such unseasoned materials, it was unreasonable to expect that a solid superstructure could be immediately erected; but those who had the direction of the war, who had never witnessed the difficulties, nor experienced the vicissitudes of military operations, were impatient for triumphs, because they had predicted them.

Military movements on the frontier of the state of New York.

Major-general Dearborn had been placed in the command of the northern frontier early in 1812, with views to the invasion of Canada; but, if I am rightly informed, without being furnished with any plan, general or particular, or any indication of the course which might probably be pursued, for the direction of his operations. Lake Champlain presented the great military highway to the centre of the enemy's province, and the American settlements at the foot of that lake were remote and exposed; the general therefore judiciously determined, to take his first position with the regular recruits in that quarter; but in the progress of the campaign, the misfortune at Detroit, put the western frontier of the state

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A body of militia called into service, under command of Major-general Van Rensselaer.

of New York in danger, and in defect of regular troops, the general called on the governor of the state for a body of militia. This gentleman, who distinguished himself as a supporter of the war, did not hesitate to comply with the requisition, and Major-general Stephen Van Rensselaer was selected for the command. The motives of this selection were equivocal, but in relation to the public service it was well judged, because of the amiable disposition, the elevated patriotism, the sound discretion, the solid judgment, inflexible honour and firm resolution of this officer. But General Van Rensselaer was opposed in politics to Governor Tompkins, and had differed also with him in opinion as to the expediency of the war; and at the same time they were rival candidates for the government of the state. In the spirit of the times, when almost every public measure is regulated by interested intrigue, the suggestion may not be uncharitable, that this command was offered to General Van Rensselaer, in the expectation that he would refuse it; and that his refusal would affect his popularity. But this virtuous citizen, although in possession of the first patrimonial estate in America, and in the enjoyment of every blessing which can sweeten domestic life, notwithstanding his opposition to the policy of the war, was too sensible of the obligation which he owed to his country and its government, to pause a moment for the course he should pursue. He received the orders of General Dearborn, and commenced his march for the frontier, accompanied by Col. Solomon Van Rensselaer, adjutant-general of the state of New York, of whom I must be permitted to say a few words. This high minded citizen soldier, and honourable man, made his noviciate in arms under my orders, as a cornet of dragoons, more than twenty years before, and at that tender age was distinguished for his coolness and intrepidity in action. His father had served as a lieutenant-colonel in the revolutionary war, and fought and bled for his country in the affair near Fort Ann, against the 9th British regiment of infantry, in 1777; he had transfused his spirit and patriotism into

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his son, who in my presence, during the campaign of 1794, fought with *sang froid*, and bled with complacency. Rising by regular promotion to a troop, he was particularly noticed by General Washington, and raised to the command of a squadron; but he was among the disbanded at the reduction of 1800; and after that period, although anxious for a military appointment, to which he would have done honour, his politics, as a good federalist, opposed an insuperable bar to his applications.

On reaching Utica, General Van Rensselaer was called to Sackett's Harbour, by a rumour of the movements of the enemy in that quarter, and from thence, after a short halt, he proceeded to Ogdensburg, where Colonel Van Rensselaer projected a handsome enterprize, which failed through the want of a few regular troops; an armed vessel of the enemy lay alongside a wharf adjoining the British magazines at Prescott, on the opposite shore. Colonel Van Rensselaer proposed, with 120 men, to ascend the St. Lawrence four or five miles after night, cross the river, fall down under the Canada shore, take possession of the buildings and carry the vessel, boarding her by land and water at the same time. Volunteers from the militia turned out for the enterprize at evening roll call, but at midnight they had changed their minds, and as they believed there existed no competent authority to order them beyond the limits of the state, this feasible project was abandoned.

Van Rensselaer's project against Prescott.

From Ogdensburgh General Van Rensselaer returned to the southward, and established his head quarters at Lewistown, on the strait of Niagara,* whilst General Smyth of the continental service, was ordered to take post in the vicinity of Black Rock, at the head of the strait. This association was unfortunate, as the latter gentleman's high military pretensions could not be reconciled, to the command of a militia general on his first tour of duty, however respectable as a citizen; and it is presumed this temper produced a spirit of insubor-

* See Atlas, No. XV.

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dination, repulsive of the harmony and concert which is essential to cordial co-operation, and that the public service was sacrificed to personal sensibility. The campaign glided away under the tardy levy of regular troops, and the dilatory assembly of the yeomanry; and it was October before General Van Rensselaer found himself in force to warrant offensive operations. It appears that at this period his solicitude for his own reputation, and more especially the interests of the service and the honour of the country, determined him to strike at the enemy. Pursuant to this object, on the 5th of October, he, by letter, required a conference with Brigadier-general Smyth, and the commanding officers of corps under his immediate orders. He addressed Major-general Hall to the same effect; and after these preliminary steps, on the 8th, he made the following interesting communication to the commander in chief.

General Van Rensselaer meditates an attack on Queenstown.

"*H. Q. Lewistown, Oct. 8th, 1812.*

"Sir,

"It is now nearly three months since, in obedience to the call of my country, I took the field to form and discipline an army, and to shape and direct a campaign on the very extensive frontiers of this state. This service, even in prospect, presented innumerable difficulties and embarrassments. Thus far I have met them in that manner which my own mind justifies, and I trust my country will approve. After a general review of our frontiers, my own judgment did not suffer me to doubt, that the Niagara river must be the scene of our decisive operations, and I selected this neighbourhood as the place best adapted to our measures, and here encamped.

His letter on that subject.

"Well knowing that the duties of the station which you hold were complicated and embarrassing, I have patiently endured much, that the affairs of my department might embarrass you the less. The crisis through which I have passed for the last month, has been trying indeed; particulars upon this occasion are unnecessary; but the result has justified my measures, and I am satisfied. Yet

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I am well aware, that any merit which may be attached to this negative service, will not satisfy the expectations of my country: to have barely escaped disaster will not be thought enough: the object of the war remains unaccomplished, a new crisis is opening, and as in it, you Sir, as well I, have a deep stake of responsibility, I shall with great freedom state to you a number of facts, submitting my opinions connected with them, and with deference leave the general conclusion to your own judgment; and as the honour and interest of the United States, your own character and mine, are most intimately connected in the subject of deliberation, I hope and trust it may receive all the attention which its importance merits.

"The United States declared the war. One army has surrendered in disgrace, and another has but little more than escaped the reiteration of the blow. The national character is degraded, and the disgrace will remain corroding the public feeling and spirit, until another campaign; unless it be instantly wiped away by a brilliant close of this.—A detail of particulars is needless; you, Sir, know service. Our best troops are raw; many of them dejected by the distress their families suffer by their absence, and many have not necessary clothing: we are in a cold country, the season is far advanced, and unusually inclement; we are half the time deluged with rain. The blow must be struck soon, or all the toil and expense of the campaign go for nothing, and worse than nothing, for the whole will be tinged with dishonour. With my present force it would be rash to attempt *offensive* operations. I have only 1,700 effective men* of the militia on this whole line. The regular troops have nearly all arrived in the vicinity of Buffaloe, except Schuyler's regiment. The batteaux have not arrived, and I learn they very narrowly escaped the Royal George at the mouth of Genesee river, where she had just cut out the schooner Lady Murray, and a revenue cutter. But two or three companies of the Pennsylvania troops had

* His reinforcements had not then arrived.

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arrived at Buffaloe, when I received my last advice from thence.

"Under these circumstances, and the impressions necessarily resulting from them, I am adopting decisive measures for closing the fall campaign; but shall wait your approbation of the plan, and the arrival of the competent force to execute it. I have summoned Major-general Hall, Brigadier-general Smyth, and the commandants of the United States regiments, to meet me on a consultation; and I am well aware, that some opinions entitled to great respect, will be offered for crossing the Niagara a little below Fort Erie, and pursuing the march down the river. I think this plan liable to many objections. The enemy have works at almost every point, and even an inferior force might hold us in check, and render our march slow; by taking up the bridges at Chippewa, they might greatly embarrass us: the cleared country is but a mile or two wide, one flank would be constantly liable to be galled by Indians from the swamps; for a considerable distance, the rapidity of the current, and the height of the banks, render transportation across the river impracticable; of course, our supplies must follow the line of march, with the trouble and hazard of them every day increasing; and should the enemy retreat from General Harrison, they would have a double object in intercepting our supplies; and by falling on our rear, and cutting off our communication, we might experience the fate of Hull's army. Besides these and many other objections, there is no object on that side, until we should arrive at the commanding heights of Queenstown, which are opposite my camp.

"The proposal which I shall submit to the council, will be, that we immediately concentrate the regular force in the neighbourhood of Niagara, and the militia here, make the best possible dispositions, *and at the same time the regulars shall pass from the Four Mile creek to a point in the rear of the works of Fort George, and take it by storm: I will pass the river here, and carry the heights of*

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Queenstown. Should we succeed, we shall effect a great discomfiture of the enemy, by breaking their line of communication, driving their shipping from the mouth of this river, leaving them no rallying point in this part of the country, appalling the minds of the Canadians, and opening a wide and safe communication for our supplies; we shall save our own land—wipe away part of the score of our past disgrace—get excellent barracks and winter quarters, and at least be prepared for an early campaign another year. As soon as the result of the council shall be known, I shall advise you of it. I have received your letter of the 29th ultimo, and shall acquaint Mr. Harrison with your direction. I regret the slowness of the mail. I have furnished an escort for it from this to Buffaloe.

"With great respect and consideration, &c.

"STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER.

"*Hon. Major-general Dearborn.*"

Judgment displayed in the plan of attack.

From this letter it will appear to any professional man acquainted with the country, and the circumstances of the enemy at the time, that although General Van Rensselaer was not professionally a military man, he reasons very much like a soldier; his point of attack was selected with masterly judgment, because from its apparent difficulty, it was the least suspected, when, in fact, the counter currents under the opposite shores, and the narrowness of the river,* rendered it the preferable traverse; and as to the plan of the enterprize, *which he had finally determined on,* it was so simple and so perfect, that an act of God alone could have prevented the success, which would have reflected honour on a master of the trade.

If the reader will cast his eyes over the map, No. 15, he will perceive General Van Rensselaer's camp at Lew-

* Three hundred and fifty yards wide.

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istown (B), from whence a road (M M) had been cut by his order, six miles through a wood to (N), at Four Mile creek, where sixty batteaux lay equipped for service; from whence it is four and an half miles by water to Fort George, under a high bank, which conceals the movement, until the boats turn the point of Niagara. The ground is so much elevated at Lewistown and Queenstown, that it may be called a mountain; it is an immense platform, which overlooks the plain below until it is terminated by Lake Ontario; of consequence, every movement from Fort George would have been under the General's eye, as well as that of the officer at Fort Niagara. It was General Van Rensselaer's intention, to have marched General Smyth, and one thousand five hundred regular troops to the mouth of the Four Mile creek, by the new road (M M), cut for the purpose, there to have been held in readiness to embark at a minute's notice. Queenstown was then to be attacked, and as it was guarded by two companies of the 49th regiment with a party of militia and Indians only, it would have been carried, with the battery on the heights, as afterwards happened. These operations, within hearing of Fort George, could not fail to draw forth the garrison to sustain the post of Queenstown, and repel the invaders; and as soon as the British column was discovered in motion, General Smyth would have embarked by a signal, and when it approached Queenstown he would have been ordered, by a courier, to proceed to the attack of Fort George, which could not have been anticipated more than twenty minutes, and being deprived of its garrison, resistance would have been vain. In the spirit of these memoirs, I shall forbear to condemn, except when urged by facts. That so feasible a plan, and one of such importance to the national honour and interests should have failed, was to be deplored, and the occasion certainly presented a fair subject for inquiry; because it could not have happened without some fault, which, for the good of the service should have been ascertained, especially,

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when General Van Rensselaer defied investigation; but the crooked policy of a corrupt cabinet will not bear inquiry, except when it is deemed necessary to hunt down obnoxious individuals.

Disappointed, by causes he could not controul, in the meditated attack on the 11th of October, to which the impatience of the militia had compelled him to assent, before his measures were matured; and not having heard from Brigadier-general Smyth on the 11th, in answer to his note of the 5th; General Van Rensselaer hoped the temper of the troops would allow him time, to repeat his summons for a consultation with the most experienced of his officers, who lay near Buffaloe, with the intention to carry into effect his original design; but the ardour of those under his immediate orders, had been heated by disappointment, and numbers now proposed to him the alternative, *of marching against the enemy or marching home.* In such a dilemma he could not hesitate, and on consulting the principal officers of his camp, and finding them earnest for an immediate attack, he determined to carry the works of the enemy on the morning of the 12th, before day; having the evening before received a reinforcement of 350 regular recruits, under Lieutenant-colonel Christie, who volunteered his services.

Affair of Queenstown, under Colonel Van Rensselaer.

No fault can be found with the plan of attack, except in the deficiency of transport, which, consisting of thirteen batteaux, limited the assaulting party to 300 non-commissioned officers and privates; and this defect is ascribed to the deficiency of competent means in the quarter-master's department. The embarkation was to have taken place on the morning of the 12th, before day, in the following order, *viz.* Colonel S. Van Rensselaer with 300 militia, Lieutenant-colonel Christie with 300 regulars; the whole commanded by Colonel Van Rensselaer: Lieutenant-colonel Fenwick and Major Mullany, were to follow with about 550 regular troops, and some pieces of flying artillery, and then the militia according to order.

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The attacking party was formed in good time, and marched off by files abreast, Lieutenant-colonel Christie leading the regulars, and Major Morrison the militia. When he arrived at the bank of the river, Colonel Van Rensselaer halted the detachment, and descended with Major Lush, and Lieutenant Gansevoort, who acted as his aids, to see the boats arranged, and formed in two divisions, one for the regulars, and the other for the militia; as it was intended their embarkation should be simultaneous, as far as the craft would suffice to receive them; but in descending the bank by a narrow path, which had been dug out of it, the regular troops got possession to the exclusion of the militia, and the necessity occurred of countermarching a part of the regulars, or embarking the whole in the first instance, and to save time the latter plan was adopted, and Major Morrison ordered to follow with the militia in the return boats.

Colonel Van Rensselaer had examined the bearings of the enemy's heavy battery, on the mountain at (G),* and that of one gun below Queenstown at (L), and perceived that by crossing the river near the gorge of the mountain, he should in a great measure escape the range of their shot; he accordingly made his traverse at (O), and landed on a narrow beach under a steep bank of forty feet elevation; but unfortunately three of the boats which *put off with him*, bearing Lieutenant-colonel Christie,† Captain Lawrence, and a subaltern, whose name is not known, returned without the orders of Colonel Van Rensselaer, and carried back seventy-five of the detachment, which too sensibly impaired his force; *but the retreat of this party produced a most pernicious effect on the*

* See the Map, No. 15.

† Colonel Christie, whose high standing as an officer, placed his courage above suspicion, *is no more;* but Captain Lawrence, who lives, and is second to no officer of his grade, alleges, I understand, that he retreated by order of Colonel Christie. At all events, no satisfactory reason has been given for the boats not proceeding.

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militia, particularly as it made no immediate attempt to effect a passage. The natural reflection produced by this spectacle in the minds of the yeomanry was, "if the regular troops cannot cross the river, surely it cannot be expected of us." Thousands of spectators were looking on, and there can be no doubt that the incident staggered their resolution.

The narrowness of the river, without the agency of spies, would necessarily warn the enemy of the movement, and they were prepared for Van Rensselaer's reception. Their force at Queenstown when the attack was made, consisted of two companies of the 49th regiment, I suppose one hundred and sixty men, with a party of militia and a few Indians who resisted their landing; they ascertained Van Rensselaer's approach by the sound of his oars, and opened their fire from the top of the bank, as soon as they could discern his movements, by which Lieutenant Rathbone was mortally wounded on board of Colonel Van Rensselaer's boat. The landing was effected with 225 men, who formed under a very warm fire, climbed the bank and routed the enemy at the point of the bayonet, without firing a shot; but in this operation Ensign Morris was killed, and Captains Malcolm, Armstrong and Wool were wounded, and a number of men killed and wounded; Colonel Van Rensselaer himself was peculiarly unfortunate, and to the accident which befel him, the day's disaster may be partly attributed; he received one ball in his hip which passed out at his spine, two in his thigh, one of which lodged, two in his leg, and a sixth contused his heel; he however kept his feet, and the enemy having fled towards the town, he ordered Captain Wool, the senior officer capable of duty, to ascend the mountain and carry the battery; giving him a direction for his movement, by which he would avoid the fire of the enemy's artillery; placing Lieutenants Randolph and Gansevoort, who volunteered, at the head of the little column, and Major Lush, another volunteer, in the rear, with orders to put to death the first man who

Account of killed and wounded.

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should fall back. During this time he had concealed his wounds under a great coat, borrowed from Major Lush, and when the party had filed off before him, no longer able to support himself, he fell to the ground. It was just then clear day-light, and he found himself amongst the wounded, the dying and the dead; a crust of bread and some water furnished by one of the former, prevented him from fainting; the anguish resulting from his wounds and every selfish feeling, was silenced by the contemplation of the sufferings of his wounded companions, but even these lost much of their interest, when put in competition with his anxiety for the safety and success, of the gallant detachment he had ordered to the heights. It pleased however the great Disposer of events, that this anxiety should be short-lived, and for the blood he had thus spilled in his country's cause, he was remunerated by the consoling shouts of victory. I had marked this patriot soldier some eighteen years before, when "the callow down had scarce began to shade his cheek, and call him man," giving earnest of future promise, and asserting claims to future fame; I beheld him in a gallant charge at the head of his troop, shot through the body, and with the blood oozing from his lungs, still smiling with complacency; yet since the days of General Washington, nor the blood of the father nor the son has found grace in the eyes of the executive; and amidst thousands of offices which have been indiscriminately lavished on the worthy and the worthless, this faithful citizen and honourable man has not been deemed worthy of attention.

The sequel of the affair of Queenstown, about which we have heard almost as much misrepresentation and folly *as about the battle of Bridgewater*, will be best described by an extract from the official letter of General Van Renssalaer;* and the following report of Captain Wool will put to rest several controverted points.

* See Appendix, No. XVI.

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"*Buffaloe, Oct.* 23*d*, 1812.

"Dear Sir,

"I have the honour to communicate to you the circumstances attending the storming of Queenstown battery on the 13th instant; with those which happened previously you are already well acquainted.

"In pursuance of your order, we proceeded round the point, and ascended the rocks, which brought us partly in rear of the battery. We took it without much resistance. I immediately formed the troops in rear of the battery and fronting the village, when I observed General Brock with his troops formed, consisting of four companies of the 49th regiment and a few militia, marching for our left flank. I immediately detached a party of 150 men, to take possession of the heights above Queenstown battery, and to hold General Brock in check; but in consequence of his superior force they retreated. I sent a reinforcement, notwithstanding which the enemy drove us to the edge of the bank, when with the greatest exertions we brought the troops to a stand, and ordered the officers to bring their men to a charge, as soon as the ammunition was expended, which was executed with some confusion, and in a few moments the enemy retreated. We pursued them to the edge of the heights, when Col. M'Donald had his horse shot from under him, and himself mortally wounded. In the mean time General Brock, in attempting to rally his forces, was killed, when the enemy dispersed in every direction. As soon as it was practicable, I formed the troops in a line on the heights fronting the village, and immediately detached flanking parties, which consisted of Captain Machesney of the 6th regiment, Lieutenant Smith, and Ensign Grosvenor with a small detachment of riflemen, which had that moment arrived; at the same time I ordered Lieutenant Ganse-voort and Lieutenant Randolph with a detachment of artillery, to drill out an eighteen pounder which had been

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previously spiked, and if possible to bring it to bear upon the village. The wounded and prisoners I ordered to be collected, and sent to the guard house. *About this time, which was between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, Lieutenant-colonel Christie arrived, and took the command.* He ordered me across the river to get my wounds dressed. I remained a short time. Our flanking parties had been driven in by the Indians, but General Wadsworth and other officers arriving, we had a *short skirmish* with them, and they retreated, and I crossed the river.

"The officers engaged in storming the battery were Captains Wool and Ogilvie; Lieutenants Kearney, Hugonin, Carr and Sammons of the 13th regiment; Lieutenants Gansevoort and Randolph of the light artillery, and Major Lush of the militia.

"I recommend to your particular notice Lieutenants Randolph, Carr and Kearney, for their brave conduct exhibited during the whole of the action.

"I have the honour to be,

"Your most ob't humble serv't,

"JOHN E. WOOL,

"*Captain 13th Regt. Inf.*

"*Colonel S. Van Rensselaer.*"

The names of the officers who accompanied Colonel Van Rensselaer on this hardy enterprize, deserve to be engraved on the scroll of fame, for surmounting obstacles almost insuperable, in the face of a determined enemy, under a heavy fire; and dislodging and pursuing a superior force, composed of two companies of the 49th British regiment, advantageously posted, with a body of auxiliary militia and Indians: it was indeed a display of intrepidity rarely exhibited, in which the conduct and the execution were equally conspicuous. Here true valour, so often mistaken for animal courage,* was attested by

* In the American service, temerity is too often taken for bravery; yet the distinction between them is as wide as between blindness and vision. Marshal Saxe, when a youth, was seen to court danger in the battle of *Malplaquet*, and afterwards at the siege of Bethune in Flan-

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Reflections on the affair of Queenstown.

an appeal to the bayonet, which decided the conflict without a shot. It must not be forgotten that 225 men accomplished what 600 were intended to achieve; and the reader will bear in mind, that with the single exception of Colonel Van Rensselaer, it was the first military combat in which either men or officers had been engaged.—Under *all* the circumstances, and on the *scale* of the operation, the impartial soldier and competent judge, will name this brilliant affair a *chef d'œuvre* of the war.

Conduct of President Madison.

Yet we heard of no mark of distinction, no honorary promotions on the occasion; the efficacy of brevets had not then been discovered, nor had it become necessary to cover the disgrace of the cabinet, by raising up idols for the adoration of the people; but if the executive could for a moment have forgotten that Gen. Van Rensselaer was a federalist, and opposed to Governor Tompkins as a candidate for the government of the state of New York, his reluctance to render common justice to the principal actors in this gallant scene, would have been counteracted by the self evident policy, of exhibiting it to the country in its true light—by contrasting it with the melancholy tale of Detroit: thus dissipating the gloom that hung over the soldiery and the country, and shewing them what deeds Americans were still capable of performing. It is true, complete success did not ultimately crown this enterprize; but two great ends were obtained for the country—it re-established the character of the American arms, and deprived the enemy, by the death of General Brock, of the best officer that has headed their troops in Canada throughout the war, and with *his loss* put an end to their then brilliant career.

I proceed to discharge a pleasing office, by stating that the officers who accompanied Colonel Van Renssalaer, were Major of brigade Lush, of the militia; Lieutenants Randolph and Gansevoort, volunteers from the

ders, for which he was complimented by the tribe of courtiers. This drew from prince Eugene the following wholesome admonition: "La temerité ne passera pas pour bravoure, vous ne devez pas les confondre, car les connoisseurs ne s'y meprendront pas."

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light artillery; Lieutenant Rathbone of the heavy artillery; Captains Malcolm, Wool, Armstrong and Ogilvie, and Lieutenants Kearney, Sammons, Carr and Hugonin, and Ensign Morris, of the 13th infantry; of whom two were killed and four were wounded. The conspicuous gallantry of Lieutenant Randolph *attracted the attention of the enemy*, and excited the admiration of his brethren in arms.

Movement of the enemy from Fort George.

Things turned out exactly as General Van Rensselaer had anticipated. General Sheaffe, who succeeded to the command, on finding that the force at Queenstown had been routed, and General Brock killed, stripped Fort George of its garrison, and leaving it in charge of the ordinary guard, marched against the invaders; and if a great part of the militia had not violated their promise, and abandoned their duty, he might have been crushed in fifteen minutes, and the peninsula would have fallen into our hands. In this state of things, an experienced officer, on seeing Sheaffe advance and file off from the direct route towards St. David, by *q q*,* in order to avoid a conflict in ascending the mountain, would have met him at that point, where he could have been repulsed with half numbers; or having made the previous arrangement with his officers for the *coup*, as soon as Sheaffe had reached St. David's, he would have precipitated himself upon Fort George, by the direct road; and leaving the enemy four or five miles in his rear, could have taken the place before they could have succoured it, and turned their own guns upon them. A single reflection would have justified the attempt.—Without retreat, the American detachment could not avoid an action, and by the abandonment of the militia, were exposed to defeat, from which the capture of Fort George alone could save them. If they had failed in the attempt, their misfortunes would not have been increased; but the chance was in their favour—they might gain much, and could lose little.

* See Atlas, No. XV.

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CHAP. XIII.

Reflections on the conduct of General Van Rensselaer and that of themilitia.

By some persons Gen. Van Rensselaer was censured for his conduct on this occasion; but this was more the effect of party animosity than any just ground of condemnation. In entering upon his command, when a rival of the Governor of the state for the succession to the government, he evinced his disinterested patriotism, and exposed himself to great hazard in point of reputation; for it is a fair presumption, that it was not Governor Tompkins's intention by the selection, to strengthen the interests of his opponent, as this gentleman, *with a thousand amiable, honourable and generous qualities*, could not be expected to commit political suicide. Advocate as I am for the yeomanry of my country, I can find no excuse for the conduct of the militia on that occasion. By imperiously demanding the attack on Queenstown, they virtually pledged themselves to support it. The attack was made, but their pledge remained unredeemed; it is in vain that we search for the cause.

The army on the strait of Niagara could have been assembled for offence only: therefore General Van Rensselaer, in making the attack, fulfilled the obligations of duty and the views of the government. The adjoining return* taken from official documents, will shew that his force was more than sufficient for the occasion; and if blamable at all, it was in yielding to the alternative

* *Return of the Troops under the command of Major-general Stephen Van Rensselaer of the New York Militia, Head Quarters, Lewistown, October 12th,* 1812.

BRIGADES.	*Where stationed.*	*Total present for duty.*	*Remarks.*
Brig. Gen. Miller's	Lewistown	588	Militia
Lt. Col. John R. Fenwick's	Lewistown	550	Regulars
Lt. Col. P. Swift's, and Lt. Col. S. Hopkins's	Black Rock and Buffaloe	386	Militia
Brig. Gen. Wadsworth's	Lewistown	1682	Militia
Brig. Gen. Smyth's	Black Rock	1650	Regulars
Lt. Col. Christie's	Lewistown	350	Regulars
		5206	

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presented to him by his fellow citizens and fellow soldiers, before his preparations satisfied his own judgment; yet under the actual circumstances of the operation, as far as they have reached my knowledge, if the militia had been faithful to their engagements, and true to themselves, the whole might have passed the strait before the arrival of the British column under General Sheaffe; whom they might have cut off from Fort George, and captured or destroyed, after which, the surrender of the fort would have become a matter of form.

General Van Rensselaer resigns his command, and is succeeded by Colonel Smyth. Maltreatment of the latter officer by President Madison.

Gen. Van Rensselaer resigned his command soon after this affair, and was succeeded by Brig. Gen. Smyth, who seems to have commenced a zealous, but short-lived career; several scenes ensued which excited much popular interest, but of these my information does not warrant a single important fact; were I however to hazard an opinion, it should be that his designs were patriotic, but that his ardour obscured his judgment, and that he was more indiscreet than culpable; he was embarrassed extremely from the insufficiency of his supplies, and the conflicts of avarice against his efforts to provide from other sources; not so with President Madison—who had placed General Smyth in trust, yet suffered him to be condemned without a hearing, notwithstanding his earnest solicitations for an inquiry. I trust I shall be supported in the sentiment, that neither poverty nor misfortune, should bar the portals of justice against any citizen of these states, and that the magistrate who permits it, is unworthy of public favour or public confidence, and disgraces his station.

The next incident worthy of note, and of which I feel myself authorised to take a summary view, is the affair of Sackett's Harbour, which occurred on the 29th May, 1813. When Major-general Dearborn sailed from that place against York in Upper Canada, he requested Brigadier-general Brown of the New York militia, to take the command; and this request was seconded by Lieutenant-colonel Backus of the 1st light dragoons, the senior officer at the Harbour. General Brown accordingly

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took the command on the morning of the 28th, and the same day the enemy's squadron from Kingston, drove in Lieutenant Chauncey who commanded a look-out vessel, and soon after appeared off the Harbour with a number of boats, making indications of an intention to land; but it seems they were diverted from this purpose, by the appearance of a number of batteaux, approaching coastwise with troops from Oswego, a number of which were driven on shore, and some of the men taken; after which the squadron came to anchor between Horse Island and Stoney Point.

The garrison of the place, at that time, consisted of a detachment made up from the 1st regiment of light dragoons, the light and heavy artillery, the 9th, 21st, and 23d infantry, and a party of United States volunteers, of which the following, with the exception of the volunteers, is a correct return.

A Report of the number of officers and men brought into action at Sackett's Harbour, May 29th, 1813.

Corps.	Lt. Colonels.	Majors.	Captains	Adjutants.	Q. Master.	Subalterns.	Sergeants.	Corporals.	Saddlers.	Farriers.	Blacksmiths.	Musicians.	Privates.	Swordmaster	Total.	Remarks.
Lt. Dragoons	1	2	6	1	1	8	26	31	4	1	1	7	223	1	313	
Lt. Artillery						4	5	4				1	120		134	
Heavy ditto						1							7		8	
9th & 21st Inf.		1	2	1		9	19	26				4	236		298	
23d Inf.						2	1	3					28		34	
Volunteers																No return.
Total	1	3	8	2	1	24	51	64	4	1	1	12	614	1	787	

THOMAS ASPINWALL, *Major, 9th.*

But the volunteers under Lieutenant-colonel Mills, of whom I have no return, may be reckoned at 1 lieutenant-colonel, 1 major, 6 captains, 6 lieutenants, an adjutant, and about 150 non-commissioned officers and privates, whose numbers were increased in the course of the 28th, by the adjacent militia, to about 500 men. The volunteers had in the first instance been stationed on Horse

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Island, *to oppose a naval invasion*, but were withdrawn; and before day light, on the morning of the 29th, this body of 500 yeomen, under the immediate orders of the General, were posted behind a sharp ridge of soil, sand and gravel, thrown up by the surge of the lake near *b**, the volunteers being on the right near the cabin *e*, and the militia on their left and inclining to the rear, *with one or two pieces of artillery* near the beach, southward of the bar, which connects the island with the main; but there was *neither ditch, nor barbette nor covert battery of any kind*. The regular recruits, under Lieutenant-colonel Backus, were formed near their camp adjoining the village, at a mile distance, with the intervention of a forest, and therefore could not in any military sense, be called *a second line;* indeed the line of volunteers and militia at the water's edge fronted to the northward, and that of the regulars, looked to the southward. In the twilight the enemy were perceived approaching Garden Island, 2 or 3 miles from the shore, and after firing several cannon and making some equivocal demonstrations, as to their point of debarkation, they directed their course around Horse Island in *a a*, landing a light party on the island, and advanced with their boats, directly to the spot where the volunteers and militia lay concealed; on turning the northern point of the island, they cheered, fired a heavy gun or two from their armed boats, and pressed on to *i i*; and when they had approached within sixty yards, the militia rose up, fired a volley, and all fled in confusion, by *o o o*, and the bridle way *g g*, excepting about eighty men, who were rallied by Captain M'Knitt, a valiant officer, and took post behind a large fallen tree, at *d*, in the rear of a small field *c c*, where they were joined by General Brown, and exchanged three or four rounds with the enemy as they debarked; but being pressed by superior numbers, they followed their companions, accompanied by the General, whose whole attention afterwards appears to have been directed, to the re-assembly and formation of *his fugitives*, somewhere about the spot *m*.

* See Atlas, No. X.

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So far my information is derived from General Brown himself, given to me on the spot, in the presence of Governor Lewis, in August, 1813; but it will be seen that this account is void of truth, and that the volunteers under Lieutenant-colonel Mills, seconded by Major Herkimer, fired three rounds upon the enemy and did not retreat, until they were within three rods, and then by order of the commanding officer after the desertion of the militia. It will also appear in the following sheets, that the gallant little corps skirmished with the enemy, as they fell back upon the left of the regular troops, under Lieutenant-colonel Backus, where they formed and fought to the termination of the combat. And the statements which follow, are founded on the reports of several of the gentlemen who were engaged on that day, and are I believe in the main correct.

After the flight of the militia, the enemy completed their debarkation, formed column, sent out flankers and advanced slowly by a narrow wagon road, *f f*, flanked on the right by a thick wood, and on the left by a perpendicular bank of ten or fifteen feet. They were engaged in their advance by the volunteers and by Major Laval, with the dismounted dragoons, and other parties from the regular troops, who skirmished and necessarily fell back before unequal numbers; as soon as the enemy reached the cleared ground *r r r*, they displayed in *n n*, and attacked the regular troops with vigour, then formed in *l n*; the dragoons on the right in or behind a ditch, which had been cut as a drain to the lake, the infantry on the left, in front of the west end of the barracks, *k k*, and the volunteers fell in on the left of the whole. The enemy pressed forward with their wonted gallantry, and in the first instance, directed their chief efforts against the dragoons, and were repulsed; the attack was renewed again and again without making any general impression on the American line; at length, when the combatants appeared to be balancing, and a party of Americans had given way, and had thrown themselves into the open log barrack, *x*, from whence they galled the enemy; Captain Gray, acting de-

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puty quarter-master general of the expedition, made an intrepid push at this barrack and fell within 15 yards of it, and soon after the enemy retreated in disorder.* Here the finger of Heaven was displayed in our protection, for however resolute the conduct of our recruits, they were nearly exhausted, and were outnumbered; and if the enemy had persevered twenty minutes longer, the sloop of war General Pike, and our depot at Sackett's Harbour would have fallen into their hands.

This was a close contest of near an hour, highly honourable to the arms of the United States; for if our accounts of the enemy's force may be relied on, inferior numbers of raw recruits, who had never looked an enemy in the face, and a small party of volunteers, not only kept their ground against veteran troops, but repulsed them with loss and disgrace. I respect the character and feelings of every honourable soldier, (there never should be a dishonourable one,) and therefore in applying the last expression, I place my justification in the circumstance of wounded men and officers being left on the field, when there was no pursuit.

General Brown's conduct in the action.

But in describing the conduct of this engagement, justice to those who won and deserve to wear the laurels, as well as my respect for truth, oblige me to pronounce that Brigadier-general Brown did not share the perils or the honour of the combat, and that he took no direction of the regular troops, until the enemy had retreated, when he rode up, and triumphantly claimed the command.

I have had these facts from so many officers who were in that action, that I cannot question their truth, and for testimony will refer to the courageous veteran, Colonel

* I have understood from good authority, that Sir George Prevost, who was in the rear, ordered the retreat, when Lieutenant-colonel Drummond of the 104th, who was afterwards killed at Fort Erie, stepped up to him and observed, "allow me a few minutes, Sir, and I will put you in possession of the place," to which, Sir George replied, "obey your orders, Sir, and learn the first duty of a soldier." Sir James Yeo was also averse to the retreat, and the occasion gave rise to the animosity which afterwards existed between those officers, and drew on Sir George the contempt of the army.

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Laval, and that independent, gallant, honourable gentleman, Captain Haig, late of the 1st dragoons, who, as well as other officers, has, I understand, even questioned the courage of the commander in chief on that occasion.

This was a memorable day, and a triumphant one also. The stake contended for was immense; for if the enemy had prevailed, and the sloop of war Pike had been destroyed, we must have taken a long farewel of the superiority on Lake Ontario. I therefore can find no excuse for the conduct of President Madison, whom we have since beheld dissipating with prodigality all the honours he could bestow, without distinction of talents, integrity or worth, until men of honour have been disgusted;—the attributes of rank have lost their distinction, grades have been confounded, and an officer hardly knows his station, whether upon the right or the left. Pardon me!—We did hear of one extraordinary mark of honour, *to render sacred the commemoration of that day;* it was the appointment of Jacob Brown, esq. to the grade of a Brigadier-general, over the heads of the meritorious Covington, and the colonels of the whole army; and thus the reward due to the memory of Lieutenant-colonel Backus, to Major Herkimer and his volunteers, and to Majors Aspinwall, Laval and Lucket,* with their gallant associates, Captains Hayne, Haig, Crooker, Helms and Halsey, Lieutenants Kean, Birch, Laval, and a long list of brave and honourable men, whose names I know not, were conferred on a man who did not possess a good social character, a *notorious smuggler*, from whom the soldier of pride, and men of sensibility and honour are now obliged to receive orders—and for what? Was it for running away with the militia, and abandoning his artillery?†—for herein is comprised all the military merits of the chief, on that day, which I can discover!!! These are thy works—this thy measure of

General Brown's promotion.

* He had his horse killed under him.

† Sir George Prevost in his general order claims three pieces of artillery.

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justice—O President Madison; for which posterity will remember thee.

The circumstances under which Wilkinson assumed the command.

The wretched state in which I found the army and all its departments and dependencies, on my arrival at Sackett's Harbour, late in August, 1813, after a journey of 1800 miles, from the south, will be exposed in detail in the third volume of these memoirs; and when all the circumstances are candidly examined, I trust it will appear to impartial posterity, that I performed my duty with zeal and fidelity; and with as much effect as could be expected from an officer the prey of a grievous and unrelenting disease. I had been opposed to the conduct of the war, and was now opposed to the project of the campaign, but my judgment was controlled by the anterior decision of the cabinet. Ambition, a zeal for the service, and a reliance on my good fortune and resource, outweighed the cautious councils of circumspection, and I entered upon the command, in opposition to the admonition of my most faithful friends. I was aware of the dire responsibility which the public sentiment had created, but felt myself armed against consequences, by the presumptuous conclusion, that if I did not succeed, I could escape the censures of the inconsiderate and malignant, by the sacrifice of my life. I was unconscious of the impiety of the reflection, which I deplore, and for which I received the chastisement of a just God, who so disposed things as to prevent the one and the other.

His state of health and that of the army referred to.

On arriving at Sackett's Harbour, from Fort George, in October, I was convinced my debility rendered me incapable of the salutary exercise of military command; but I could not absolve myself from it, without the forfeiture of my commission. I again permitted my judgment to be overruled, and while confined to my bed, suffered myself, without a suspicion of the circumstances, to be embarked with a corps charged with deleterious matter, generated by poisonous provisions, which was soon converted into a mass of floating disease;* and when the

* See the testimony of Colonel Walbach, vol. iii, and the report of Dr. W. M. Ross, in the appendix same volume.

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time arrived, wherein one hour of vigorous health would have sufficed to seize on victory or to consummate my *presumptuous conclusion*, I found myself prostrate, reduced to infantile weakness, and whilst I trembled over the verge of the grave, I was incapable of seeking an honourable death; yet although I was *deceived and abandoned*, the army was saved, and reached the French Mills without material injury but from disease, *and I boldly assert for the corps, that they, at least, lost no honour.*

It is not within the compass of these memoirs, to detail the difficulties, hardships and sufferings, incident to the maintenance of a cordon of sixty miles, on the borbers of an enemy of superior force, and under a Canadian winter; but it is due to my own character and to public information, that I should in this place make certain developements, which may otherwise sink into oblivion, and will not I hope be unacceptable to the reader.

General Dearborn confines some British prisoners as hostages.

The enemy having set up the pretension, that certain persons taken in arms at Queenstown, were either British subjects or deserters from their ranks, and having sent them to England for trial; Gen. Dearborn, by order of the executive, threw an equal number of British prisoners of war into close confinement, as hostages for the safety of the prisoners taken at Queenstown; and avowed his determination to Sir George Prevost, to inflict on those hostages the same punishment, which the British government might impose on the prisoners taken from us, whose lives had been menaced. In consequence of these proceedings, the following correspondence took place.

"*H. Q. Montreal, Oct. 17th*, 1813.

"Sir,

Correspondence on that occasion.

"Having transmitted to his majesty's government, a copy of a letter addressed to me on the 31st May last, by Major-general Dearborn, in which it is stated that the American commissary of prisoners in London, had made it known to his government, that twenty-three soldiers of the 1st, 16th, and 13th regiments of infantry, made prisoners, had been sent to England, and held in close con-

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finement as British subjects, and that Major-general Dearborn had received instructions from his government to put into close confinement twenty-three British soldiers, to be kept as hostages for the safe keeping and restoration in exchange of the soldiers of the United States, who had been sent as above stated to England, and that in obedience to those instructions, General Dearborn had put twenty-three British soldiers in close confinement, to be kept as hostages.

"I have the honour of acquainting you, that I have received the instructions of his majesty's government, distinctly to state to you, for the information of the government of the United States, that I have received the commands of his royal highness the Prince Regent, forthwith to put in close confinement, forty-six American officers and non-commissioned officers, to be held as hostages for the safe keeping of the twenty-three British soldiers, stated to have been put in close confinement by order of the American government.

"I have been directed, at the same time, to apprise you, that if any of the said British soldiers shall suffer death, by reason that any of the said soldiers of the United States, now under confinement in England, have been found guilty, and that the known law, not only of Great Britain but of every independent state, under similar circumstances, has been executed, that I have been further instructed to select out of the American officers and non-commissioned officers whom I shall have put into confinement, as many as may double the number of British soldiers who shall have been so unwarrantably put to death, and to cause such officers and non-commissioned officers to suffer death immediately. I have been further instructed by his majesty's government to notify to you, for the information of the government of the United States, that the commanders of his majesty's armies and fleets on the coast of America, have received instructions to prosecute the war with unmitigated severity, against all cities, towns, and villages belonging to the United States, and against the inhabitants thereof, if

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after this communication shall have been made to you, and a reasonable time given for its being transmitted to the American government, that government shall unhappily not be deterred from putting to death any of the soldiers who now are, or who may hereafter be kept as hostages for the purposes stated in the letter from Major-general Dearborn.

"I have the honour to be,
"With great consideration and respect,
"Your excellency's ob't humble serv't,
"GEORGE PREVOST,
"*Lt. Gen. & Com. of the Forces.*

"*His Excellency Gen. Wilkinson,*
Commanding the Forces of the U. S."

Extract of a letter from General Wilkinson to Sir George Prevost, dated Head Quarters of the Army of the United States, Grenadier Island, Nov. 1st, 1813.

"Sir,

"I yesterday evening had the honour to receive your letter of the 17th instant, and shall immediately transmit a copy of it to the executive of the United States.

"I forbear to animadvert on the acts of our superiors whatever may be their tendency, but you must pardon me, Sir George, for taking exception to an expression in your letter; the government of the United States cannot be "deterred" by any considerations of life, of death, of depredation or conflagration, from the faithful performance of its duty to the American nation."

"*War Office, November 17th,* 1813.

"Sir,

"In the absence of the secretary of war, I am commanded by the President to instruct you to make known to Sir George Prevost, in answer to his letter of October 27th, and for the information of his government, that the

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government of the United States, *adhering unalterably* to the principle and purpose declared in the communication of General Dearborn to him, on the subject of the twenty-three American soldiers prisoners of war, sent to England to be tried as criminals, and the *confinement* of a like number of British soldiers prisoners of war, selected to abide the fate of the former; has in consequence of the step taken by the British government, as now communicated, ordered forty-six British officers into *close confinement*, who will be immediately put to death, in case of the putting to death of the forty-six American officers and non-commissioned officers ordered into *close confinement;* and that they will not be discharged from their *confinement*, until it shall be known that the forty-six American officers and non-commissioned officers in question are no longer *confined*.

"You are also to make known to Sir George Prevost, for the information of his government, that in the event of any proceedings of the British commanders on our coast, against the cities, towns, or villages of the United States, or against the inhabitants thereof, contrary to the laws of war, observed among civilised nations, as threatened in his communication of the 27th of October; the United States will avail themselves of the means in their power, for such exemplary retaliations, as may produce a return to those legitimate modes of warfare, from which no other consideration than the necessity imposed by the conduct of the enemy could ever induce them to depart.

"With great respect,
"I have the honour to be,
"Sir, your most obedient,
"Humble servant,
"DANIEL PARKER, *C. G.*

"*Major-general Wilkinson,*
Commanding the northern army, U. S."

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Extract of a letter from Major-general James Wilkinson, dated Head Quarters of the army of the United States, Malone, December 3d, 1813, to his excellency Sir George Prevost, Lieutenant-general and Commander in Chief of the British forces in North America.

"Sir,

"In my letter to you of the 1st ultimo, I apprised you, that your communication of the 17th October last, had been transmitted to the President of the United States, and I have now the honour to lay before you the result.

"In a recent communication from the war department, I am commanded by the President, to make known to you, in reply to your letter and for the information of your government, "that the government of the United States, *adhering unalterably* to the principle, and purpose declared in the communication of General Dearborn to you, on the subject of the twenty-three American soldiers, prisoners of war, sent to England to be tried as criminals, and the confinement of a like number of British soldiers, prisoners of war, selected to abide the fate of the former, has in consequence of the step taken by the British government, as now communicated, ordered *forty-six* British officers into close confinement, who will be immediately put to death, in case of the putting to death of the forty-six American officers and non-commissioned officers, ordered into close confinement; and that they will not be discharged from their confinement until it shall be known, that the forty-six American officers and non-commissioned officers in question are no longer confined." I am further commanded by the President to advise you, for the information of your government, "that in the event of any proceedings of the British commanders on our coast, against the inhabitants thereof, contrary to the laws of war, observed among civilised nations, as threatened in your communication of the 17th of October, the United States will avail themselves of the means in their power, for such exemplary retaliations, as may

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produce a return to those legitimate modes of warfare, from which no other consideration, than the necessity imposed by the conduct of the enemy, could ever induce them to depart."

"Without the power to avert the calamitous scenes, which must ensue the pretensions of your government to violate a constitutional principle, held sacred by the American nation; and without examining the effects of this pretension, should it be retorted by the American government against the population of Upper Canada, composed as it is in a great measure of native born American citizens; I am impelled by the impulses of humanity, to inquire, whether some relaxation may not be expected on the part of your government, and whether the officers and non-commissioned officers thrown into gaol at Quebec, may not be restored to the ordinary condition of prisoners of war."

Extract of a letter from Sir George Prevost, Lieutenant-general and Commander in Chief of the British forces in North America, dated Head Quarters, Montreal, December 11th, 1813, to Major-general Wilkinson.

"Sir,

"I had the honour to receive your excellency's despatches of the 4th instant. In communicating to your excellency, in my letter of the 17th October last, the retaliating measure, which his majesty's government had been compelled to adopt, in consequence of the imprisonment by Major-general Dearborn, of twenty-three British soldiers as hostages, for as many natural born subjects of his majesty, found in the service of the United States in arms against their native country, I had entertained the hope, that the American government would have been induced to abandon the principle, not recognised by any other civilised nation of the world, and against which, when attempted to be put in practice, they have all invariably protested.

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"I regret to find myself disappointed in this just expectation, by the communication made by your excellency, of the determination of your government unalterably to adhere to the principle and purpose, declared in the letter of Major-general Dearborn, of the 31st May last, and of its having in consequence, directed forty-six British officers, prisoners of war, to be closely confined until the forty-six American officers and non-commissioned officers, now closely confined at Quebec as hostages, shall be released.

"This step on the part of the government of the United States, leaves me no other alternative but that of directing, and which I have accordingly done, the whole of the American officers (including the three general officers) now on their parole in these provinces, to be immediately placed in close confinement; and I have further to acquaint your excellency, that it is my determination to put into close confinement every American officer who shall hereafter fall into my power, to the number of forty-six, inclusive of those who had been confined previous to the receipt of your excellency's letter, and so to keep them confined, until I shall receive the further directions of his majesty's government on this subject.

"The unalterable determination of your government to adhere to the principle it has adopted on this occasion, precludes the hope of any relaxation, in favour of the unfortunate officers of both countries, who are, and who will be sufferers by it. Otherwise alike impelled by sentiments of humanity with yourself, I should be inclined to ask of you, whether that constitutional principle, which however sacred it may be held by the American nation, yet violating as it does, the constitutional principle of every other independent nation, adopted and acted upon for ages, before the American government or people had a name, ought any longer to be respected in favour of those who, having broken their faith and allegiance to their own government, are claimed and protected by your's, with the sacrifice of the comfort and safety of your own native born subjects, and whether considera-

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tions like these are not sufficiently strong, to induce the government of the United States, to restore to the ordinary condition of prisoners of war, the British officers and soldiers whom they have directed to be put into close confinement."

Extract of a letter from Major-general James Wilkinson to Sir George Prevost, baronet, Commander in Chief of his Britannic majesty's forces in North America, dated December 20th, 1813.

"Sir,

"Your excellency's letter of the 11th instant reached my out post, on Chateaugay, the evening of the 18th, and came to my hands yesterday. I regret the resolution you have adopted, in respect to the retaliatory system forced on the executive of the United States, by the resuscitation of dormant pretensions, which had ceased for a long time to torment mankind, and which, (your excellency will pardon the observation) have not been "invariably" asserted by the British government; several instances might be quoted to support the fact, but I will trespass the remarkable case of the late Major-general Charles Lee only, on your excellency's attention, because it is most directly in point; sometime after the capture of that officer by Colonel Harcourt, his exchange was demanded by Congress and refused by the British commander, on the express grounds for which you now contend; in consequence of which, Lieutenant-colonel Campbell, of the 71st regiment, and five Hessian field officers were thrown into ignominious confinement as hostages for his safety, and here the contest terminated; the British government yielding its pretensions and admitting General Lee to be exchanged as an ordinary prisoner of war. But while I deplore the course you have marked out for your conduct, I should fail in courtesy if I did not acknowledge my obligations to you, for the candid avowal of your intentions, in respect to the American officers, who may hereafter fall into your hands;

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as this avowal will I flatter myself constitute their safeguard against imprisonment. I thank your excellency, for the reference you make to the recent admission of the American nation into the great family of mankind; the reflection excites a sense of proud exultation in the breast of every man who took part in the contest, and witnessed the rise, progress, and termination of a revolution, which made the thirteen British colonies free and independent; but if errors, founded on ages of Gothic barbarism, and afflictive to humanity, have prevailed anterior to the independence of those colonies, they cannot be too soon corrected, and very much is to be expected from the unalterable adherence of the American government to the resolution it has taken; for as all things are perishable, and the affairs of man ever on the change, before this nation shall have reached its zenith, the governments of Europe, following the destinies of ancient Rome and Greece, of Carthage and the kingdoms of the east, will sink beneath the weight of their own infirmities; and doctrines derived from Roman bondage and feudal vassalage, will, like the office of the vidames become extinct and be forgotten."

The controversy terminates.

I have never been able to ascertain to my satisfaction, how the baronet and the President adjusted this affair, after the tenacity avowed on both sides, or who it was that made the first concession; though I rejoiced at the termination of a controversy, which menaced the lives of innocent, honourable men, and tended to renovate scenes of barbarism, which would disgrace the civilised world. Under the good temper and happy auspices on which the negociations at Ghent were conducted, could a fair and final adjustment of the contested claims of naturalization and citizenship have been accomplished, it would have put at ease many an unquiet breast; but alas! like the tale of "free trade and sailor's rights," this subject too had been deferred.

As soon as I had recovered such a state of convalescence, as enabled me to sustain the motions of a sleigh

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and bear the freezing temperature of the clime, I determined to enterprise against the enemy's posts. My first plan was to break up his quarters from Chateaugay to St. John's, and to take permanent hold of Cornwall, in order to cut the communication between the lower and upper provinces, and prevent the transmission of the cannon and naval stores, which were about to be forwarded from Montreal to Kingston, for the vessels then on the stocks at that post; but I was diverted from these objects, by the failure of the contractor to supply provisions, and determined to remedy the disappointment, by striking at the post of Prescott, a weak place which required 800 men for its defence, but was garrisoned by 250 only.

Wilkinson plans an attack upon the enemy's post of Prescott.

Pursuant to these objects I determined to consult his excellency Governor Tompkins, and, should he approve the plan, know what assistance he could furnish; but previous to my departure from the frontier, I gave Brigadier-general Brown, who commanded at the French Mills, the following precautionary and preparatory orders, and wrote the following letter to the secretary of war.

"*Head Quarters, Malone, Jan. 8th,* 1814.

"Dear Sir,

"I shall to-morrow move to Chateaugay, and from thence to Plattsburgh, to examine the condition of those posts, and to discover whether the enemy meditate an attack on the latter place; pending my absence I shall rely on your caution and vigilance to protect the post, of your immediate command, against any attempt of the enemy; and for this purpose, every approach in front, flank or rear, direct or devious, should be incessantly watched by guards and light scouts or patroles; take care of the various communications by Trout river, because as they lead to your rear and are least suspected, they may be selected by the enemy as the most favourable to a *coup de main.*

"I shall give the officer commanding at Chateaugay, orders to keep you constantly advised of his situation,

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and of every circumstance interesting to the service, which may fall under his notice; should he ask you for succour against the enemy, you will necessarily give it seasonably and to the utmost extent which may consist with your own safety, and he will be pointedly instructed to reciprocate services on the same principle.

"Our wounded with the enemy I understand are in need of a surgeon and of clothing.

"I will request your particular attention to these objects, as the health of the men and the character of the government, depend on our attentions to them. The clothing will be subject to your disposal, and you will be pleased to order it to Cornwall, in charge of Doctor Rogers, who may be accompanied by a paymaster to furnish the men the arrearages due, or the surgeon may be charged with this business.

"During my absence you will necessarily and with due caution, receive the flags of the enemy and make such communications to them, as the public service or the interersts of our citizens may render necessary.

"I conjure you to urge the necessity of the equipments for the heads, hands and the feet of the men; and to have them prepared for hardy enterprise. You will be pleased to order Doctor Mann to be reimbursed the sum he has paid for leather to make overshoes, and I entreat of you to have the number increased, by the combined industry of the workmen of the line, and on the most economical terms.

"Intelligence, the soul of military enterprise, must claim your utmost attention, not only the designs of the enemy, but their posts, garrisons and cantonments in relation to fortifications, strength and numbers, must be ascertained as far as it is practicable.

"I have received information from Montreal direct, the 6th instant, the day before yesterday; the front of the cannon intended for Kingston will leave La Chine the 17th instant, and is to move in detachment by tens. It is to be drawn by horses and oxen. You must be on the alert, and if you can learn when they pass the river Rai-

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sin, it is worthy the hazard to endeavour to get possession of them, and to destroy or bring them off; the distance from your cantonment is about 9 miles, *i. e.* six down Salmon river and three across the St. Lawrence; in sleighs it may be run in an hour and a half; and 5 or 600 select men, with two field pieces, will suffice for the enterprise, which may be pressed or abandoned at the discretion of the commanding officer, who should be cautioned strictly, not to commit his detachment to be cut up by a superior force, and this he may easily prevent, as the country is open, the route is free in all directions, and his movements will be rapid. Trustworthy guides should be provided, and I offer the opinion, that the movement should be made just in season to reach the point of destination at the dawn of day. I need not suggest to you, the vital importance of secresy on this and all other points of confidential communication.

"I have the honour to be, respectfully, Sir,

"Your obedient obedient,

"JA. WILKINSON.

"*Brigadier-general Brown.*"

[CONFIDENTIAL.]

"*Malone, January 9th,* 1814.—*Morning.*

"Sir,

"I last night received advice from Montreal of the 6th. The cannon are to move by tens, and will be drawn by horses and oxen. The front is to leave La Chine the 17th, in consequence of which I have ordered Brigadier-general Brown to enterprise, under due precautions, and have advised Colonel Smith at Sackett's Harbour to hold a detachment in readiness. Captain Little, of St. Lawrence county, with his company, are ordered to scatter themselves from Massena to Hamilton, along the river, and to strike should an occasion present, otherwise to fly to the aid of the detachment of Colonel Smith, which will have Chapin and A. Smith for guides. You have under cover an extract of my letter of instruc-

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tions to General Brown, who is active, ardent and intelligent. Though too feeble for the journey, I have determined to see Governor Tompkins, and shall set out at noon, to give him a private interview at Ballstown. I shall travel on the runners of a wood sled, on which a box is placed to receive my bed, for I am unable to keep my seat more than ten miles. If my health continues, I shall not be absent more than ten or twelve days at most.

"You have under cover, a first essay at the theatre before me; it is incorrect in course and distance, but will serve to give you a general idea of the enemy's posts and cantonments.

"With perfect respect, I have the honour to be,

"Your obedient servant,

(Signed) "JA. WILKINSON.

"*The Hon. John Armstrong,*
Secretary of War."

Wilkinson proceeds to Waterford.

I then proceeded by Plattsburgh and Burlington to Waterford under the pretence of ill health, and on my arrival I wrote the following letter to the secretary of war.

"*Waterford, Sunday morning, Jan. 16th,* 1814.

"Sir,

"I left Chateaugay the 10th and arrived here this morning, having been detained a day and a half at Plattsburg. On my route I fell in with Mr. Anderson, the contractor; whose prospects of a supply of flour from the borders of Lake Champlain, and this quarter of the country are so faint, that we must until the opening of spring, depend for that article on the western parts of this state; not only for the posts of the French Mills and Chateaugay, but I fear in some measure for that of Plattsburg also; and our distance from the settlements of Black river, the Oswego, and Mohawk, to which we are to look for support, combined to other causes, depending on the season, leave us no expectation of being able to accumulate such magazines, as may justify our taking post with-

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in the territory of the enemy as heretofore proposed; indeed my personal observations and inquiries made on the road I have travelled, and reports just received by General Swartwout of our prospects from the westward, justify the apprehension that we shall be barely able to subsist the troops from day to day.

"In this situation, instead of advancing on the enemy, we are in danger of being compelled to retrograde for subsistance, and as it would almost destroy the troops to erect second cantonments at this inclement season, with the approbation of government, I will endeavour to find quarters for them in Prescott and Kingston; which I consider practicable to a corps of hardihood and resolution, aided by the facility of movement to be derived from sleds.

"Charge me not with caprice for thus varying my plan of operations, since it is caused by posterior information, which presents an insuperable obstacle to the execution of the project submitted in my despatch of the 7th instant. The object now presented had not escaped my mind, but it was opposed by my repugnance to give ground to the enemy, and to sacrifice our boats, the infallible consequence of its execution. The reduction of Prescott and Kingston, and the occupancy and maintenance of those posts, would be secured by our proximity to our own resources, and our distance from those of the enemy.

"You are sensible that I dare not enter upon this expedition without permission, and also, that the lapse of the season renders a prompt decision necessary, on the part of the executive; I shall therefore expect your answer as soon as may be convenient, and in the mean time will put the troops in the best condition for the enterprise my means may permit. Should the President sanction the plan now proposed, I shall remove the sick, the convalescent, and every article of useless baggage, together with the artillery and munitions of war, for which I shall have no occasion, to Plattsburg; shall destroy our boats and break up our cantonments at the French Mills and Chateaugay, and whilst I keep the

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enemy in expectation that these precautions are preparatory to the attack of their posts and cantonments in my vicinity, I shall detach four times the strength of the garrison, to steal a march and take Prescott by surprise or storm, whither I shall follow that detachment with the main body a few hours after it marches; and having every thing in readiness for the movement, by its rapidity, and the feints of some light parties, I shall prevent the enemy from penetrating my real design, until I have gained my first point.

"In examining the abstract of our force which accompanies this letter, you will perceive a very considerable part of it is reported "sick in quarters;" but of these we are to calculate on three-fourths being competent to any stationary service with arms, and amongst them one-third of the whole number, for any duty of a soldier. I therefore think I shall be able to march five thousand five hundred men, which, with the co-operation of the corps at Sackett's Harbour, will I expect give us a force of seven thousand five hundred non-commissioned officers and privates, to which, if necessary, I hope Governor Tompkins (whom I shall see to-morrow) may consent to add two thousand volunteers or militia.

"The blow which I desire to give, warrants great sufferings, much hardship, and considerable hazard; because if successful, we shall destroy the squadron of the enemy at Kingston, kill and capture, eventually, four thousand of his best troops, recover what we have lost, save much blood and treasure to the nation, and conquer a province.

"I anticipate the difficulties in my way, and know that disease, tempests, and snow storms, may forbid the attempt, and baffle all my hopes; but I remember what General Montgomery accomplished, under circumstances more unfavourable; and we may reasonably expect the elements will not always be unpropitious.

"I have the honour to be, &c.

"JA. WILKINSON.

"*Hon. John Armstrong,*
Secretary of War."

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Having despatched this letter early in the day, that it might be in season for the Albany mail, to elude the suspicion of any military arrangement by a formal visit to the Governor, which would have been communicated to Sir George Prevost in the course of six days, I passed the following note to his excellency and received his answer.

[CONFIDENTIAL.]

"*Waterford, Sunday morning, Jan. 16th,* 1814.

"Sir,

"Though in very feeble health, a sense of duty has induced me to seek an interview with your excellency, that I may avail myself of your judgment and advice, on several topics of high public importance, which equally interest the national government and that over which you preside; and I will pray of you, Sir, to pardon me when I observe that I am desirous our meeting should be marked with as little notoriety as possible, to prevent the intelligencers of the enemy from putting him in alarm. It is therefore, I have halted at this place, under the pretence of indisposition and for the sake of tranquillity, where, would you condescend to wave etiquette, and make a casual excursion apparently for recreation, I can visit you and hold a conference, without exciting suspicion. But if this proposition should not meet your approbation, I will wait on you this day at such time and place as you may name.

"In the mean time, I remain, with high consideration and respect,

"Your excellency's obed't. and humble serv't.

"JA. WILKINSON.

"*His Excel'y. Governor Tompkins.*"

"*Albany, January 16th,* 1814.

"Dear Sir,

"The situation of my family deprives me of the pleasure of seeing you this day. Mrs. Tompkins is so sick that I cannot with the least propriety leave home at present. I will be at Mr. Demarest's to-morrow, unless ab-

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solutely prevented by the situation of my family. If prevented, I will apprise you early in the morning.

"I am *anxious for an interview with you*, and shall not fail to be at Waterford to-morrow, if it be possible for me to leave home.

"With great regard and consideration,

"I am, Dear Sir, your's, &c.

"DANIEL D. TOMPKINS.

"*Major-general Wilkinson.*"

Agreeably to his promise, Governor Tompkins did me the honour to visit me on the 17th. It was my first interview with him, and I confess I was agreeably struck with his easy address, unaffected manner, and apparent frankness. Having opened to him in detail my original plan, and also the project I had substituted, in consequence of the failure of provisions, he seemed delighted with the last proposition, and observed that it perfectly accorded with the views, he had previously communicated to the President and the secretary of war, and expressed some surprise that he should not have received answers to his letters. He appeared satisfied of the feasibility of the enterprise, made no doubt of the acquiescence of the executive, dwelt on the importance of its consequences, and assured me he would cheerfully contribute all the means in his power, to facilitate the execution. Fortunately for my personal repose, but unfortunately for my political career, not all the hypocrisy, deception, selfishness and perfidy, which I have experienced from the year 1778 to the present day, have been able to shake my confidence in human probity, or excite my suspicions against a fellow man, without cause.—Could I then doubt the candour of Governor Tompkins? It was impossible! and it is a circumstance of unaffected sorrow, that I should ever have found cause to suspect it.

I was flattered by his excellency's affability, and charmed by the cordiality with which he entered into my views; he promised me transcripts from his communications to the President and the secretary of war, to which

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he had in conversation alluded, and when he left me, he carried with him my confidence, my respect and esteem. I think it was on the morning of the 19th that I received his letter dated the day before, covering the transcripts he had promised me, which I trust I may now present to the reader, without transgressing the limits of propriety or decorum.

"*Albany, Jan.* 18*th*, 1814.

"Dear Sir,

"The continuance of the indisposition of my family prevents my calling on you again, unless your stay at Waterford should be protracted.

"Upon examination I find that my letter to the secretary of the 2d instant, suggested *two* plans of winter movement; but that to the President of the 3d, very nearly comports with the proposition you mentioned yesterday. I send you extracts containing the substance of the two letters to which I referred you yesterday.

"I also send you the copy of a communication received this day from Major-general Hall of the militia, commanding at present on the Niagara frontier. You will see, that notwithstanding the recent panic, a few volunteers approached within half a mile of Fort Niagara, attacked a party getting wood, killed four and took eight of them prisoners. I have no doubt if this spirit should be fostered by an expedition of the army in any direction, the effects would be very important. As I have no authority upon the subject of prisoners, passports, or paroles, I must beg you, as commanding officer of this military district, to give General Hall the requisite directions, in relation to the British prisoners mentioned in his letter, and also with respect to the validity of certain brevet commissions to which he refers, of which I have no knowledge.

"Should you continue at Waterford longer than you expected, be pleased to advise me of it by the return of the bearer.

"I am no military man, and therefore am wholly unqualified to judge of the best *manner* of accomplishing

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the enterprise you propose; but permit me to say, that, if undertaken it must not fail, if you are obliged to send your whole army in detached corps of one thousand after the first detachment, and within a few hours of each other. For, if the attempt fail, you have neither hospitals or quarters for your wounded, nor accommodation for the rest, as Ogdensburgh village is within the range of the shells and balls of Prescott.

"Please to notify me as early as possible of the time and place at which militia will be required to second your plans. Wishing you complete restoration to health, a comfortable and agreeable journey to head quarters, and a successful and glorious issue to your enterprise; permit me to assure you of my sincere intentions of co-operating cheerfully and ardently, in any thing which may be devised to revive the desponding spirits of the community.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"DANIEL D. TOMPKINS.

"*Major-general Wilkinson.*"

Extract of a letter from D. D. Tompkins to the President, dated Albany, Oct. 3d, 1814.

"The panic which these transactions (taking of Niagara, burning of Lewistown, Manchester, Young's town and Buffaloe) have spread amongst the inhabitants for a number of miles back, is inconceivable. They are abandoning their possessions and flocking into the interior. The British force lately at Burlington, consisting of about 1100 regulars and 300 Indians, have by their recent enterprises put it out of our power to prevent their progress to Erie or to Detroit. For militia and volunteers alone, without ordnance or discipline, cannot be competent to retake Niagara, and without that, the road of the enemy to those places is secure. The consequences of permitting things on that frontier to remain in their present state are too obvious to be enumerated.

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"Expeditions, undertaken with volunteers and militia alone, have generally failed, and are peculiarly unwise where the taking of fortified places, either by regular approach or by storm, is necessary to the success of the expedition.

"Impressed with the importance of immediate winter operations by our army, to counteract those of the enemy, I have ventured to suggest to the war department one or two plans which have occurred to me, and take the liberty of sending you a copy of the communication containing them. It is not with much confidence in my own opinion upon the subject, that I am so bold as to intimate the propriety of this or that movement; not being a military man, nor acquainted with the number and health of the troops at the several stations; but it must be obvious to you, that something must be done speedily, or the next will be a defensive campaign only, if not one of absolute disgrace.

"The army at Plattsburgh and French Mills, might march to Montreal, if their numbers were sufficient, a movement in that direction is practicable in other respects. But the more general, and I think the most judicious, opinion amongst intelligent men is, that the taking of Prescott, if nothing more be done this winter, might be and ought to be effected without delay. The possession of that place will enable us to intercept the supplies needful for the equipment of additional vessels at Kingston, and in that way reduce Kingston indirectly; whilst it will enable General Wilkinson to make Sackett's Harbour perfectly secure from attack. Indeed I am not without hopes, that a direct attack upon Kingston will be deemed advisable, and be attempted before the ice shall leave the St. Lawrence."

Extract of a letter from D. D. Tompkins to the Secretary of War, dated Albany, Jan. 2d, 1814.

"Sir,

"I have this moment received an express, announcing the distressing intelligence that the flourishing village of

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Buffaloe is destroyed. The British crossed at Black Rock, two miles below Buffaloe, on Thursday morning at day-break, about 1000 strong. They were attacked with spirit by volunteers under the command of General Hall, and several lives were lost; but the volunteers and militia were overpowered and dispersed. The British proceeded to and burnt the village, and I presume the vessels of the Erie fleet which were ashore at Buffaloe.

"General Hall's account is not very circumstantial. The capture of Fort Niagara is confirmed. The whole frontier from Lake Ontario to Lake Erie is depopulated, and the buildings and improvements, with a few exceptions, destroyed. The bodies of several inhabitants of Lewistown have been found in a mangled state; they were massacred and scalped. In a former letter I took the liberty of suggesting the danger of the destruction of the Lake Erie fleet. The frontier which lies between the British and the harbour of Erie, is now open for their march to that harbour, and if left unmolested by our army, they will inevitably go to Erie, and destroy the vessels there, and will besides make an effort to retake Detroit, and destroy the vessels on the upper part of the lake. Were they to accomplish those objects, and I have no doubt they will attempt them, it will, with presents of clothing and other articles taken in Fort Niagara, enable them to regain the confidence and services of the western Indians.

"To counteract these winter expeditions of the enemy, it will be indispensable, that our army be in motion. I would throw out for consideration, whether the whole force at French Mills and Plattsburgh, or a sufficient detachment thereof, ought not to be removed to Ogdensburgh or Sackett's Harbour, and acting in concert with the force at the latter place, attack Prescott or Kingston? or whether, if that be deemed impracticable, 2500 of the army cannot be conveyed to the Niagara frontier, and with the militia and volunteers (I will pledge myself there shall be 5000 volunteers, provided the above number of regulars be associated with them) make a diver-

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sion from Kingston and Prescott, whilst the residue of the army, with Commodore Chauncey's force, assails one of those places?

"Either of those movements will cost little more than three or four large vessels, which must otherwise be built. It is as healthy, as safe and as economical, to move warmly clothed troops in January and February, as in the wet months of October and November. They can sleep in their sleighs with their arms in their hands, and can encamp as they would form. The same sleighs which transport the troops may carry provisions and forage for ten days.

"Be assured that something must be done, and that speedily and effectually, or the confidence of the citizens of this quarter in the government will be impaired, if not lost.

"You will pardon these suggestions; they are made with the best intentions: any other arrangements or plans which may be devised, will equally receive my earnest co-operation and support. If any thing be undertaken, it will be indispensable that all the enterprising and valuable officers of the army who may be absent from it, should immediately return to their posts; and that all the recruits in Pennsylvania, New York, and Vermont, and the troops on furlough be made subservient to the plan."

The Governor had encouraged me to expect the honour of a second visit; but as his domestic concerns interfered, and I was detained by a despatch from Sackett's Harbour, advising me that that post was menaced by the enemy, I wrote his excellency on the 20th in the terms following.

"*Waterford, Jan. 20th*, 1814.

"Dear Sir,

"It appears from intelligence recently received, that the enemy are weakening their posts in the neighbourhood of Montreal, with intention to strengthen those to

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the westward. This circumstance, and the exposed situation of Sackett's Harbour, induces me to request that you may be pleased to order to that place, with as little delay as possible, a reinforcement of one thousand militia or volunteers. The destruction of our squadron is as interesting to the enemy, as its preservation is material to the United States; as little therefore as possible should be left to hazard; and should no danger exist, we derive advantage from this arrangement, which, while it prevents the attack of the enemy, will be interpreted into a mere precaution of defence, and of consequence will favour any measure of offence we may be permitted to make; and as a further act of deception, I will beg leave to offer to your excellency's consideration, the policy of incorporating two or three hundred volunteers, to watch the right bank of the river St. Lawrence from Cranberry creek down to Hamilton; with the professed design to intercept smugglers, but in fact to amuse the enemy, to mask my movement against Prescott, and be ready to cooperate in such manner as may be found most useful.

"I pray you to pardon me for a third proposition.—Were it possible to call out 1000 or 1500 men, to take post at the French Mills, only for a week or two after my march, it would greatly embarrass the enemy, and the tenure would be perfectly safe; and 1000 at Plattsburgh, in addition to our regular force there, for three months, would give entire security to that place and Burlington, until all the attention, the efforts and exertions of the enemy, would be drawn towards the upper province. Will you have the goodness to favour me with an answer on these topics.

"With high consideration and respect,
"I have the honour to be,
"Your excellency's obliged
"and faithful servant,
"JA. WILKINSON.

"*His Excellency Governor Tompkins.*"

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But being advised, verbally, that this letter was defective in form, I proposed to take a private dinner with his excellency, which would furnish an opportunity for explanation; in consequence of which, I addressed another letter to him, in which my application for auxiliary militia was, *at his desire*, rendered more strictly conformable to the requisitions of the law, as the copy will show.

"*Waterford, Jan. 21st*, 1814.

"Dear Sir,

"I have cause to believe the enemy meditate the invasion of Sackett's Harbour at no distant day, with a view to the destruction of our squadron at that place; the preservation of which is an object of such moment to the United States, that I have ordered every disposable man at Greenbush, to march for the support of it, and I hope this detachment may amount to five hundred non-commissioned officers and privates. Could your excellency add one thousand men to this force, under the authority of the law of February 21st, 1795, for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the union, suppress insurrections and repel invasions, the post menaced would be placed in a state of security against any force with which the enemy can attack it; and if a detachment of two, three, or four hundred men could be called out under the same law, to patrole and guard the right bank of the river, from the neighbourhood of Cranberry creek down to the town of Hamilton, it would add essentially to our safety. The proper departments will be ordered to furnish transport, provisions, quarters, fuel, &c. should you deem it expedient to indulge my wishes.

"With high consideration and respect,

"I have the honour to be,

"Your excellency's ob't humble serv't,

"JA. WILKINSON.

"*His Excellency Governor Tompkins,*
State of New York."

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Colonel Scott's appointment to a separate command, and reflections thereon.

I took my departure from Waterford on the 22d, and was overtaken by an express at Salem, about midnight, with a despatch from Colonel Winfield Scott, covering instructions from the war department, wherein he was appointed to the command of an armament, within the district of my command; without reference to my authority, in violation of the fundamental principles of service, and contrary to General Armstrong's *express stipulations when I entered on the command of the northern army*; but this outrage on military subordination and the feelings of a gentleman, was highly decorous when compared with the indecencies I have witnessed. I perceived from the tenor of the order, that the execution was impracticable in the depth of winter. It appeared to me that the mark of distinction by the secretary, was intended as a commutation to the Colonel, for secret services rendered at the metropolis, and the measure proposed, a display of sympathy for the unfortunate inhabitants of the western frontiers of New York, *whom he had sacrificed by his disposition of the troops of General Harrison.* Under this conviction, and the disgust excited by the fraudulent proposition, for robbing the officers of the militia of their rightful command, I wrote the letter of the 23d to the Governor, which is now published, together with Scott's letter and instructions, and my answer; in the first of which it will be seen, that the fawning hypocrite, having understood, no doubt from Governor Tompkins, the enterprise I meditated, and discovering the impracticability of that on which he had been sent, could seek a command* under

* Yet in less than four months after, when the secretary of war had succeeded by intrigue, perfidy, and the subserviency of President Madison, to remove me from command, this *inflated coxcomb*, well knowing his desires would be indulged, observed in the presence of Doctor E. W. Bull, "*that General Wilkinson was too old for the active duties of the field; that he hoped never again to see him, or any other general officer of his age, at the head of the army.*" But the *shallow braggart went on to observe* "*that from his knowledge of details, he thought him* (General Wilkinson,) *well qualified to discharge the duties of secretary of war, better perhaps than any of his predecessors.*" This was

the man whom he had publicly calumniated, and perfidiously slandered. CHAP. XIII.

" *Demarest's (Waterford), Jan. 22d,* 1814.

" Sir,

" I have the honour to inclose you a copy of a letter* from the war department, under which I have arrived within your district. Doctor Bull and Captain Nourse, whom I met below Albany, informed me that you had left this place on the morning of the 21st, and it was not

modest in a young gentleman, who had not seen quite two campaigns, and contrary to the practice and experience of mankind, he contrived to make the impression at head quarters; and President Madison soon after observed to an officer of his early acquaintance, that "*public opinion held age to be objectionable, and youth to be preferable in military service.*" Being asked if that was his opinion? he said "*No; that he thought age and experience should design, and youth execute; but that that was not the prevalent opinion.*" —Therefore this faithful magistrate sacrificed his own judgment, backed by reason and experience, to corrupt intrigue and popular prejudice. But General Scott was moved by double motives; first, to put out of the way all obstacles to his own ambition; secondly, he was aware that I understood his character, and that although I should render strict justice to the officer, I would correct the *intrigues and impostures* of the man.

* This letter of instructions is mislaid, but it referred to Governor Tompkins for a brigade of militia, and in order to secure the chief command to Colonel Scott, it was proposed to wave the legal organization, and call out regiments without a general staff. Hence my letter to the Governor, dated Salem, Jan. 23d, 1814. I never understood that any thing further was attempted in order to carry this project into execution, though I some time in February received the following letter from the secretary of war; in which it will be observed he enumerates the troops which are to compose the expedition, making a small error of one thousand men in his addition.

" *War Department, Jan. 30th,* 1814.

" Sir,

" It is intended to institute a campaign immediately against the enemy's winter positions in the peninsula. This has three objects;

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until 12 o'clock to-day, that I learnt from Colonel Jenkins that there was any hope of finding you here. I immediately hastened out to see you.

"Under the authority of the inclosed, I ordered Captain Williams's company of 2d artillery to Williamsville, near Buffaloe, via Albany; it was to leave Philadelphia on yesterday, and will proceed in sleighs. It was also my intention to have ordered a company of the 3d artillery to the same destination, from Greenbush; but independent of the *general impropriety* of putting in motion troops within your district without your direct authority, I have just learnt from General Dearborn, that the detachments at Greenbush have received a different destination by your immediate order. I shall not, of course, presume to touch a man at that place.

"Under the circumstances disclosed, my situation is truly embarrassing. I wish to execute my orders with satisfaction to all of my superiors: if I had been fortunate enough to have seen you, this might have been ac-

1st, to break up those positions; 2d, to compel the enemy to abandon Fort Niagara; and 3d, to prevent their making detachments westward against Malden and Detroit, or against our shipping at Erie and Put-in Bay. For this service a corps will be composed as follows, *viz.*

400	regular infantry,	
100	artillerists,	
400	Indians,	
2400	volunteer militia, and	
100	do.	mounted.
Making a total of 2400		

"Of the regular part of this force, Colonel Scott has carried with him 100 artillerists; 100 infantry under Lieutenant Riddle, are at or near Batavia; whence it follows, that 250 are yet to be furnished. These you will supply without delay, either from the recruiting depots in the western part of the state of New York, or from Sackett's Harbour, if General Brown's detachment should have reached it.

"Yours respectfully,

"J. ARMSTRONG.

"*General Wilkinson.*"

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complished: as it is, I pray you will favour me with your instructions by the return of the express.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"With the highest respect,

"Your most obedient servant,

"W. SCOTT,

"*Colonel 2d U. S. Art.*

"*Major-general Wilkinson, Comd'g, &c. &c.*

"*P. S.* Colonel Scott *congratulates* General Wilkinson on the recovery of *his health*, and *should be happy to serve* at any point on the frontier below Niagara.—*Colonel S. has no partiality for militia*, but hopes to do his duty, wherever he may go."

"*Salem, Jan. 23d*, 1814, 6 *o'clock, A. M.*

"Sir,

"I received at 11 o'clock last night your letter of the day, and consider the protection of Sackett's Harbour, seriously menaced by the enemy, so much more important than any attempt to recover Niagara, that I cannot vary my destination of the detachment from Greenbush; and I perceive that your orders authorise you to dispose of artillerists from the several depots of recruits only.

"Having entered my department, I trust you so well understand the principle of subordination, as not to interfere with any officer under my command, unless by my permission, or with any of the troops of the department before you are duly authorised; as such interference would not only be an unwarrantable usurpation, but might destroy the most salutary plans, which can be devised for the interest and honour of the nation.

"Your orders from the secretary of war being specific, and without reference to the commanding officer of the department, it would be improper for me to interfere, or to offer you instructions.

"I consider the armament proposed for your direction of very great importance, as it may make a diversion of the enemy's force from Kingston, and favour the

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safety of Sackett's Harbour. I therefore wish you a prompt levy of your force, and a speedy arrival at the proposed theatre of operations. The excellent, and as I understand complete, company of Captain Williams, you will find ample for the operations of that arm, with a column of two thousand five hundred infantry.

"With consideration and respect,

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"JA. WILKINSON.

"*Colonel W. Scott, Artillery.*"

[PRIVATE.]

"*Salem, Jan. 23d,* 1814.

"Dear Sir,

"Last night at 11 o'clock, I received a letter from Colonel Scott, with a copy of his instructions, which will of course be submitted to you.

"The design is a good one, but I fear you may find difficulty in the execution; for you know Virgil tells us, "it is natural for like to love like;" and Colonel Scott's high crest, notwithstanding his merits, may not "*prima facie*" conciliate your yeomanry to his command; besides, the "*amour propre*" of your general officers may be affected. These fears may, I hope be unfounded, and I offer them to your consideration, that, in case of an accord of sentiment, you may offer some more feasible plan to the secretary of war; for some operation of the kind proposed, should be carried into execution;—not, my dear Sir, that I expect any other immediate effect from it, in the quarter of Niagara, than the repossession of the settlements, and to favour objects of more importance, by drawing a portion of the enemy's force from below. Colonel Scott wishes a part of the detachment ordered from Greenbush to Sackett's Harbour, which I cannot allow him, because the protection of that post is of ten thousand times more importance than the immediate recovery of Niagara, and

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because one hundred artillerists (a full company I understand) ordered by him from Philadelphia, is ample for the operations of two thousand five hundred infantry, whether stationary or on alert movements. I intreat you to advise me of the progress of this plan, and have the honour to be, with great respect and esteem,

" Dear Sir,

" Your obliged and obedient servant,

" JA. WILKINSON,

" *His Excellency Governor Tompkins.*"

A retrospect.

Here I must stop short in my narrative, to introduce an episode, of such complication and intricacy, as may bewilder the reader, and defy explanation. It is a case of strong character, in which it would seem impossible to condemn, and yet it will be found difficult to acquit, an exalted national character, of an act of deliberate falsehood and premeditated calumny, which would justly consign his memory to everlasting infamy. On my way to Troy, to vindicate my honour against the foul charges suggested by the vindictive spirit of the secretary of war, General John Armstrong, and supported by the injustice of President Madison, I reached the city of New York on the evening of the 28th of Jan. 1815; and on the morning of the 29th, received a visit from that distinguished officer and most excellent young gentleman, Captain Biddle of the navy, who presented to me the Evening Post, in which I read with some emotion the following publication.

[CONFIDENTIAL.]

" *Albany, January 31st,* 1814.

" Dear Sir,

Governor Tomkins's letter to General Armstrong.

" Since I wrote to you last, I have had two interviews with General Wilkinson, whom I never saw before. He threatens to make a dash soon, and consulted me upon the very plan which I had suggested in my letter of the 2d inst. He must have *learned that I had suggested the*

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taking of Prescott, and mentioned that as *his* plan to *tickle me.*

"I have great confidence in your penetration upon most subjects, but I fear you have not formed a correct judgment of the General's *talents and qualifications.* He is wonderfully tenacious of his authority, and is very indifferent about his old *carcase!* and *vapours too much.* I predict that he will *venture but little if he can help it.*

"He has sent me a request to order to Sackett's Harbour one thousand militia or volunteers with as little delay as possible, *without mentioning the cause for the call, the act or authority under which it is made,* or the time of service. I am endeavouring to get some volunteers for the purpose. I hardly dare call for another detachment from Collins's district so soon. The authority to accept, organize, and transport volunteers, ought therefore to come from you. Will you drop me a line upon that subject immediately?

"If your army bill has passed, send forth your recruiting officers immediately. A great number of men can be inlisted in the western and northern parts of this state, if you strike whilst the iron is hot. Do not forget one thing; that if the bounty be not advanced punctually, particularly *in the first instance,* the enemies of the government will be able to defeat in a great measure the object of the law.

"I have a letter from General Hall, stating that Niagara is garrisoned with from 250 to 300 men, and that our patroles go within musket-shot of the fort. The British keep no guards outside the fort.

"Colonel Scott will be awkwardly situated there in the first instance. Major Malcolm has gone on, and General Hall informs me, takes away all the regulars now on the Niagara frontier (about 150). Of course, Scott will have 100 men, now at Greenbush on their way to Niagara, and about 1700 militia. I have told him I will withdraw the General the moment it is wished or thought prudent. But as two of our brigadiers are volunteers, and may have influence, and be esteemed by the militia

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and volunteers now out, would it not be best to *brevet* Scott a Brigadier-general *for that command only*, with an understanding (if he is not appointed a brigadier of the army immediately) that the rank shall be limited to that command. I have *no objection* to it, and would recommend it as politic, and as the most *popular way to get along* with the militia brigadiers.

"We have a curious council of appointment, consisting of two federalists, one Clintonian, one Madisonian, and your humble servant, having a casting vote only. No one can tell what we shall do, but my own belief is that the council will be *decidedly and inveterately federal.*

"Will you have the goodness to direct *the settlement of my accounts* as soon as may be convenient.

"I am, dear Sir, your friend, &c.

"DANIEL D. TOMPKINS.

"*General Armstrong.*

"*P. S.* Are we to have an armistice or peace?"

Reflections on the preceding letter.

After reading the correspondence which is exposed in the preceding sheets, before the authenticity of this letter can be admitted, it will be necessary to presuppose a degree of inherent baseness, which feeds on scandal and fattens on falsehood! We must admit a confirmed habit of hypocrisy and deceit, against which all the cardinal virtues and every honourable impulse must revolt with detestation! For my own part, I could not think so meanly of a fellow man, who with talents below mediocrity, had raised himself from the humblest walks of society, to the chief magistracy of the first state of the union; this fact is confessed, and gives rise to the presumption, that he possessed that broad integrity and purity of life, which supplies every defect of birth, talents and fortune.

I therefore on arriving at Albany paid my respects to the Governor, accompanied by a gentleman of my acquaintance. My reception was most cordial, and his excellency oppressed me with civilities, which the delicacy of my situation obliged me to decline. After the termi-

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nation of my trial, I again called to pay my respects to the chief magistrate and make my *congé*, and as I had not understood that he denied the authenticity of the letter published in the Evening Post, I felt a disposition to sound him on the subject. I was accompanied by a respectable friend, who does not forget the circumstances. In the course of conversation, I took occasion to observe to the Governor, that "*our friend Armstrong had treated us rather scurvily?*" But he waved the subject, and appeared mortified. I however determined not to let him off there; and took occasion to remark, "Governor, I am myself strongly tempted to *drop a letter of General Armstrong's;*"—he appeared more embarrassed, but still made no reply. I pitied him, took him by the hand, and bidding him adieu, left him to his reflections, as I now do the world, to judge between us; sincerely regretting the necessity of this exposition, and from my heart forgiving him, if he did aim a secret stab at my character, to gratify his vanity or enhance his importance with the men then in power. But I trust the independent, virtuous militia of New York, will render justice to a *military officer*, who endeavoured to sustain those legitimate rights, which it seems *the man of their choice* did not appear to regard with the same delicacy or justice.

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CHAPTER XIV.

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General Wilkinson determines to attack Prescott upon his own responsibility.—Makes his arrangements accordingly.—Description of the fort of Prescott.—Proposed mode of attack.—Anticipated consequences of its fall.—His prospects blasted by the Secretary of War's orders of the 20th and 21st of January.—Troops march for Sackett's Harbour and Plattsburg.—Sufferings to which they are exposed.—Supposed motives for those orders.—Secretary of War omits giving orders respecting the post at Chateaugay Four Corners.—Wilkinson withdraws the troops on his own responsibility.—Enemy enters the territory with about 1500 or 2000 men.—Reflections on the Secretary's conduct.—Incidents on the western frontier of the state of New York referred to.—The little faith to be reposed in the official reports of the commander in chief demonstrated.—Difficulty in obtaining correct information respecting events of the war.—Case of Colonel R. Nicholas cited.—Complaints of Major Herkimer and the U. S. Volunteers against the conduct of General Brown.—His immediate promotion.—Reflections on the appointment of General Brown and other officers to report on the moral and military qualifications of the officers of the army.—Mr. Dallas's insidious statement of the 17th May, 1815, referred to.—Reflections thereon.—Motives for inquiring into the conduct of public officers.—General Brown marches with 2000 picked men, ostensibly to defend Sackett's Harbour or attack Kingston.—Is taken under the especial orders of the Secretary of War.—Receives instructions from him.—Despatches an officer to concert measures with Colonel Scott and Governor Tompkins.—The result of his mission.—General Brown marches to-

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wards Buffaloe.—Countermarches, and marches again.—Substance of his orders.—Mistakes the Secretary's feigned letter for an order, and acts upon it.—Is permitted to remain on the Niagara, and afterwards to cross the strait.—Instructions for his conduct.—The expedition into Canada, and reflections thereon.—Propriety of conferring marks of distinction on the several corps engaged.—Risk incurred by General Brown in crossing the strait of Niagara.—The enemy's want of enterprise, and fall of Fort Erie.—General Brown detaches less than half his army to advance on the whole force of the enemy.—General Rial fails to take advantage of this movement.—An opportunity presented to General Rial, by which he could have destroyed General Brown without a blow.—The defects of the camp at Street's creek exposed.—General Porter advances and drives in a party of the enemy's irregulars.—Is in turn obliged to retreat.—Main body of the enemy discovered.—Accidental meeting of Generals Brown, Scott and Ripley.—Conversation which ensued.—Defects of the camp further illustrated.—Affair of Street's creek.—Captain Towson distinguishes himself.—General Scott's gallantry displayed.—A tribute to Majors Jesup, Leavenworth and M'Neil.—Military rewards in the revolutionary, compared with those lavished in the late, war.—Reasons assigned for the difference.—Conduct of General Brown in the affair of Street's creek.—General Scott's conduct approved.—American and British returns of killed and wounded.—Variance between General Brown and General Porter's reports noticed.—General Brown's ignorance or want of exertion demonstrated.—Captain Treat's guard fired on by the enemy.—General Brown's official letter to the secretary of war of 7th January, 1815.—Reflections thereon.—Major-general Brown detected in another falsehood.—Conduct of the executive.—Quixotic determination of General Brown.

Wilkinson determines to attack

It will have been seen in the preceding chapter that on my arrival at Waterford, on the 16th January, I submitted to the consideration of the executive, through the

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Prescott, and takes his measures accordingly.

secretary of war, my project for taking the enemy's post at Prescott by a *coup de main*. I had proposed originally to await the orders of the government upon this enterprise, and to employ the intermediate time in the necessary preparations; but on a conference with Governor Tompkins, discovering that my plan met his hearty concurrence, I resolved to take upon myself the responsibility of the operation, and to proceed upon its execution with the least possible delay, as the season, the state of the roads, and the river Cadaraqui, favoured the enterprise. Accordingly I hastened back to the frontier, taking Whitehall and other depots in my way, to make arrangements for pressing forward provisions. I arrived at Plattsburg on the 26th, and despatched orders to Colonel Bissel at Chateaugay, and Brigadier-general Brown at French Mills; the former to hold 500 picked men in readiness to march at a moment's warning for distant service, and the latter to be prepared with a few pieces of artillery on sleds, and a thousand of his best troops, for the same operation. I had intended to have selected and taken with me 600 men from the troops at Plattsburg, having directed that excellent officer Major Reese, of the quarter-master general's department, to provide a sufficient number of sleighs for the movement, under pretence of accelerating the transport of provisions and stores.

My measures were now so nearly completed, that I had fixed on the night of the 29th or 30th to move off from Plattsburg, and leaving orders at the several posts for provisions and baggage to follow me. It was my intention to make no halt except to refresh the horses, as the troops could have slept in the sleighs. This would have enabled me to pick up Colonel Bissell's corps, and reach French Mills by noon the next day. From this post, whilst my horses were feeding, I should have sent out a heavy detachment to menace Cornwall, and stepping into the sleighs, would have proceeded rapidly to the destined point of attack, which I should have taken by surprise, in the twilight of the next morning. I had pos-

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Description of the fort of Prescott.

sessed myself of an accurate plan and description of the place: it was a quadrangle of sod work, and without a single flanking angle, or exterior obstruction of any kind, with its battery pointed to the river, which the post was originally intended to command, and to serve at the same time as an entrepot between Montreal and Kingston: a block house had been erected for the interior defence, but the roof was flat, and could have been gained without difficulty from the parapet. Such a place without a fraising, a ditch, palisades, or abbatis, garrisoned by only 200 or 250 men, its utmost strength, could have made little opposition, even in open day, to columns of 500 select men, marching simultaneously upon each of its faces. The blow would have disconcerted, distracted and appalled the enemy, and Governor Tompkins assured me its accomplishment would enable him to turn out 5000 militia; our regular force could then have been incorporated at Ogdensburgh and in the vicinity, and the Canadas would have been effectually dissevered: Kingston and the peninsula would have fallen by famine, or the sword, at our discretion; the lake squadron would have been destroyed—and what would have been the effects? Montreal might have been taken in the spring, before the arrival of a man from Europe—thousand of lives since sacrificed without object, would have been spared—and the public treasure would not have been dissipated in building 80 gun ships on Lake Ontario, and in senseless enterprises.

Consequences of its fall.

His plan defeated by the arrival of orders from the secretary of war.

Whilst indulging these cheering anticipations, of rendering such important services to my country, and all hands were actively engaged in preparations, an express from Colonel Jenkins, quarter-master general at Albany, reached me on the evening of the 26th, or morning of the 27th; and at once put at end to my preparations, blasted all my hopes, subjected the public to millions of expense, sacrificed thrice the number of men Prescott would have cost, and *as at Niagara*, exposed the frontier to be overrun by the enemy.

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"*War Department, Jan. 20th, 1814.*

"Sir,

"I have the orders of the President to inform you, that under a full consideration of your present position on the Salmon river, in relation as well to present safety,* as to future operations, it is his direction that you abandon that position, and that after detaching General Brown with two thousand men and a competent proportion of your field and battering cannon to Sackett's Harbour, you will fall back with the residue of your force, stores, &c. to Plattsburg. Means should be immediately taken to cover the men in huts or barracks, and to promote this object orders will be directly sent from this office to the officers commanding at Plattsburg and Sackett's Harbour, to put into activity, by hired labour and fatigue duty, all the resources within their respective commands. This will not, however, supersede any auxiliary measures or orders, going to the same object, which *your experience and judgment may suggest.*

"The sick and wounded of the army should be sent to Burlington.†

"I have the honour to be,
"Very respectfully, Sir,
"Your most obedient servant,
"JOHN ARMSTRONG.

"*Major-general Wilkinson.*"

* Yet I believe there was not an officer in the army who did not then consider the position perfectly safe. General Brown desired to be attacked by 10,000 men.

† Humanity forbade this, as many of them would have perished on the road.

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"*War Department, Jan. 21st*, 1814.

"Sir,

"The movements of the army, directed by my letter of yesterday, are to be simultaneous, the better to secure both from the enterprises of the enemy.

"I am, Sir, very respectfully,

"Your obedient servant,

"JOHN ARMSTRONG.

"*Major-general Wilkinson.*"

The reader will not fail to remark on the absolute tenor of this order, which, in the dead of winter was to produce an entire change in the disposition of the main body of the army, just after the troops had made themselves comfortable in quarters, at an immense expense, by which the abandonment of our hospital to the enemy, with our sick and wounded, became inevitable; and the troops (many of them feeble convalescents) were exposed to severe sufferings and certain destruction; and all this under the pretext of dangers which did not exist, and of future operations without a plan.

Sufferings to which the troops were exposed.

On the receipt of the above order, I despatched the following letter to General Brown.

"*Plattsburg, January 28th*, 1814.

"Sir,

"You must be prepared to march for Sackett's Harbour, with two thousand men, and a competent proportion of field and battering cannon. You understand the route infinitely better than I do; and therefore in concert with the quarter-master general, will have transport provided, and every necessary arrangement made to accelerate the movement. You may look for me, on Monday or Tuesday, when we will determine, what corps shall compose your detachment;—in the mean time have the whole of the troops prepared to march;—and as this unlooked for disposition and division of our force, may expose us to the enterprise of the enemy in our neighbour-

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hood, this order must be cautiously concealed, from all persons but the quarter-master general, and the steps you may be obliged to adopt, ought to be attributed to any other cause, but the true one.

"With consideration and respect,
"I have the honour to be, Sir,
"Your obedient servant,
"JA. WILKINSON.

"*Brigadier-general Brown.*"

Indeed, the transactions of this period, particularly when we take into view the capricious disposition of the force under Major-general Izard, appear to be among those inscrutable mysteries, which the rulers of nations think it expedient to conceal from the vulgar. It was reported in the channels of public information, that the intention of breaking up the cantonment at French Mills was to provide an adequate force for the defence of Sackett's Harbour, or to attack Kingston; but very soon after, the troops under General Brown were heard of marching and counter-marching through snow, mud and water, between Sackett's Harbour and Niagara. These movements appeared to be at variance with public rumour, since, if Sackett's Harbour was to be defended, or Kingston assaulted, it would not seem to be the *very best mode* of accomplishing either object, to march the very troops ostensibly destined to perform these important services, a distance of about 150 miles south of the points of defence and attack, especially at such a season. My countrymen will not perhaps have forgotten the pains taken by the government to transfer from its own imbecility, improvidence, and parsimony, the reproach attached to the army at *Terre aux Bœuf* in 1808, where the soldier suffering under the diseases of the climate, was denied by his government the sustenance suited to the debility of his condition, or necessary to the restoration of his health; where milk and porter were interdicted to men who were suffering every privation and the extreme of disease, for a paltry stipend of five dollars

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a month. This sensibility which was then so much alive, appears to have been totally exhausted on that occasion; for no inquiry has been yet made, nor any information given on those desolating operations, fruitful only of misery and waste of the public resources and of human life.

As my letter of the 16th January, written at Waterford, a few miles from Albany, would reach Washington by the regular course of the mail about the 20th; what the precise motives were which operated on the *war minister* or the *aulic* council, immediately to arrest my enterprise, it is for those who have marked the character of their measures generally to form an opinion; but as the successful attack of Prescott, which Governor Tompkins himself believed practicable, would have defeated the intrigues of my enemies, checked the current of slander and averted the persecutions which had been determined on; would it be uncharitable, to suppose that those considerations made it advisable to prevent the attempt, and for this purpose, as no reasonable objection could be opposed to an enterprise, which, independent of its intrinsic merits, had been recommended by Governor Tompkins, the hasty order of the 20th, was made out *by order* of President Madison; or, is to be imputed to the instable projects and vacillating councils of the country, so unprofitably conspicuous throughout the war? The first hypothesis is however but too probable, as the system of intrigue, and the desperate schemes which were at this time in operation, to form parties favourable to particular views of ambition, had arrived at a stage of wicked maturity. Station and rank in the army, were not considered so much for the military defence of the country, as for the political elevation of individuals. Rival candidates for the presidency contended who should secure the most influential and active partisans; and the passions of these adherents were to be gratified by the sacrifice of rivals, the separation of superiors, or the depression of every man who was either not subservient, or who maintained the dignity of self respect.

Supposed motives for the order.

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It will be perceived by the secretary's order, that in his hurry he had overlooked our post at Chateaugay Four Corners, or forgot we had such a post, for his order is confined to the cantonment at French Mills. I should have been warranted by a strict observance of my orders, in leaving the former garrison behind me, but as it would have been exposed to the combined force of the enemy at Cornwall, Coteau de Lac, and east of the St. Lawrence; to prevent its being cut up, I withdrew it on my own responsibility; and a few days after, the enemy entered our territory with a motly force of about 2000 men, composed of regular troops, militia, and Indians, advanced to Chateaugay Four Corners, and ravaged the country for twenty miles round, to the great dismay and suffering of the inhabitants. Yet these scenes, like those of the strait of Niagara, were suffered to escape the attention of the government. Some sensibility was manifested by the public, in consequence of which, the elected representatives of the people and the guardians of their rights, called upon the secretary to make a report; and never did a legislative body receive a report, so replete with disregard to its requisition, and to public and individual justice. Instead of a view of the military affairs and a relation of transactions, concerning which the representative body had sought for information, the chief officer of the executive in the war department, did not condescend to offer a single sentence of narrative or exposition; but taking the mass of correspondence in the war office, he selected, garbled,* and put together a volume of those

Enemy advances to Chateaugay Four Corners.

* As an instance of the dexterity of the secretary of war at garbling, I will call the reader's attention to the following extract, taken from the 67th page of the report laid before the House of Representatives, January 31, 1814, by the righteous President Madison.

Extract of a letter from Major-general Wilkinson to the secretary of war, dated December 24th, 1813.

"I believe I have not hitherto transmitted you a copy of a communication which took place between Commodore Chauncey and myself, the day before I sailed from French Creek, and I do it now to shew you what were my anticipations of the movements of the enemy left

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papers, wholly omitting some, and without explanation of any, so arranged them that they were calculated to deceive, rather than inform; but adapted to promote the

behind me, and how delusive were all the promises made to me, that my rear should be protected." The charitable object of this publication was to excite a hostility between Commodore Chauncey and myself, when it was in fact the *delusive promises* of the secretary that I particularly alluded to.

It did not suit the policy of the secretary to publish the whole of this letter, which I shall now offer to the public, because it would have exposed some information to the House of Representatives, which might have been satisfactory to them, and which it was his interest to conceal.

"*Head Quarters, Malone, 24th December, 1813.*

"Sir,

"I have the honour to transmit you a copy of my correspondence with Sir George Prevost, respecting the system of retaliation forced upon us by the conduct of the British government; and also touching parole exchange, in which the baronet does not in my judgment exhibit that broad liberality, which his rank and station bespeak.

"We have as yet experienced neither injury nor insult from the enemy, and if I rightly interpret appearances, he would most readily enter into a suspension of hostilities for the winter.

"Our occupancy of the French Mills in the vicinity of the St. Lawrence with our main force, has produced the embarrassments which I anticipated, and obliged the enemy to weaken his upper posts, in order to protect his settlements opposite to that position. With three posts we form a cordon from the St. Lawrence to Lake Champlain, approximate the enemy and cover our own settlements, while this chord of 64 miles obliges him to maintain a chain of ten or twelve posts, on the segment of a circle, extending from the Isle aux Noix in front of our right wing, to Cornwall on our left flank, a distance of about 150 miles.

"Our cantonment near the St. Lawrence being put in a state of security against any attack of the enemy, my next attention will be carried to the Four Corners, where, in the course of a month, I flatter myself we shall be in a situation to bid defiance to the combined force of the enemy, from Chateaugay to St. John's inclusive.

"The spirits of the troops composing the division of the St. Lawrence appear to be invincible, and in spite of the evils they experience, they are gaining health; these evils may be comprised under a few heads, viz. in a scanty allowance of *unwholesome* bread; the flour which was deposited long ago at Plattsburg, and exposed since to the weather, by Major-general Hampton, every barrel of it having been *damaged*, and the depot now exhausted: leaving us in this quarter,

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object which he then contemplated, and for which every other interest was set aside; that of the appointment of a *lieutenant-general*, to which the secretary of war as-

of such as it is, a few days on hand without a prospect of a supply, as I understand Mr. Thorn, co-contractor, from the quarter of Lake Champlain. My *requisitions founded on the contract, might have prevented this evil, but for the interpocition of your instructions, to Mr. Anderson, of the 2d instant, which I do conceive would render any further interference on my part improper;* unless it be to accelerate and facilitate the operations of Mr. Thorn by every means in my power, who to do him justice appears zealous and active, and has gone post to Utica, backed by the authority of the quarter-master general, in order to hasten forward a supply from that quarter; in the mean time we must resort to *musty buiscuit*, of which, I understand, a quantity had been found at Plattsburg, *exposed to the weather like all other public property at that place.*

"2d.—The great *deficiency and very bad quality* of medicines and hospital stores.

"3d.—The want of pay, the public being in *arrears* to some of their corps *from the 1st of July*, and to the remainder from *the 1st of September;* I fear bad consequences from this defect, because discharged men returning home with arrearages due, may spread reports injurious to the recruiting service, and the unprincipled part, among those whose terms of service do not soon expire, may be tempted to desert, and

"4th.—Winter clothing, to include blankets, flannel shirts, great coats, a large stock of strong socks, with woollen caps and mittens; without the three last articles, we can make no enterprise upon the enemy, nor can the men mount guard, without exposing their ears, toes, and fingers to be frost bitten.

"I believe I have not hitherto transmitted you a copy of a communication which took place between Commodore Chauncey and myself, the day before I sailed from French Creek, and I do it now to shew you what were my anticipations of the movements of the enemy left behind me, and how delusive were all the promises made me, that my rear should be protected.

"To enforce the principles of subordination and discipline, and to see duty regularly performed, Major Pinkney, whom I have named as an adjutant-general in place of Walbach, agreeably to your proposition at Sackett's Harbour, has taken his station at the French Mills, and is the only officer of that appointment to 10,000 men, at present on this station; and as Major Johnson, the assistant inspector, has lately died, and we have no officer here, at the head of that department, I shall appoint Major Cummings to perform the duty, and do recommend him to you for confirmation in the appointment, as I find him an officer qualified to reach the highest grades of his profes-

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pired; the measure beyond all doubt would have succeeded, had not another minister at the same time been in competition for the same station; by this conflict of personal ambition, the public was rescued from the additional burthen; for the rivals acknowledged by their conduct that the office was wholly unnecessary, each rather opposing its creation, than consenting to see his rival elevated. Such was the *spirit of patriotism and virtue* which pervaded our public councils, pending a war, the issue of which was yet uncertain; and when the national funds were in effect exhausted.

View of the incidents on the western frontier and strait of Niagara.

From this painful retrospect, I shall proceed to take a desultory view of the incidents on the western frontier of the state of New York, and the strait of Niagara, during the winter and the campaign of 1814. I regret that my

sion, should his life be spared. I thank God I have conquered my disease, and without a relapse, hope to mount my horse in two weeks; I wish I could say as much for General Izard, whose life has been in extreme danger, and who is incapable of any kind of duty, and must leave the district so soon as he can be moved in a sleigh. Then this most critical command of 10,000 men, say 13,000, including the various posts of the district, will be left in my charge with a single brigadier-general to assist me, and he, though energetic, zealous and brave, a soldier of *five months standing*, and of course, in a great measure *ignorant of the organization, formation, and combination of military bodies, and indeed of the general principles of duty and service.* You perceive I have given up all ideas of abandoning my command, and having made myself master of every direct approach, and every devious route to the enemy, in my front and on my left flank, by land and water, I should prefer to finish in May next the work I have begun; but if the war in this quarter is to be prosecuted, no matter who conducts it, *the preparations should be now begun*, that operations may be commenced the moment the winter breaks, *say early in April:* then by two simple distinct operations, by different routes hitherto unknown, yet very obvious, Upper Canada may be reduced and possession taken of Montreal, probably by the 1st, certainly before the 20th of June.

"I have no letters from you since the 25th ultimo.

"With perfect respect, I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"JA. WILKINSON.

"*The Hon. John Armstrong, Secretary of War.*"

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means of information respecting the transactions in this quarter, are neither so ample, nor so particular, as to enable me to enliven the narrative and interest the reader, to the extent my inclinations would lead me; but from the general character of General Brown, and the various misrepresentations in which he has been detected by Commodore Chauncey, Major-general Ripley, Captain Treat lately of the army, and other persons, no confidence can be placed in his official reports; and the lights which should distinguish truth from falsehood in such cases, seem to have been so sedulously obscured, not only by the actual spectators, but by the national executive, that we must look forward to a period when intrigue and corruption, shall have ceased to interpose an impenetrable veil between the people and their public concerns, before the merits of those transactions will be developed; at present all that can be gathered consists of detached fragments, which have by the force of circumstances broken through the obstructions, by which the general history has been obscured.

Misrepresentations imputed to General Brown in his official report.

In the autumn of 1814, Colonel R. Nicholas presented a written complaint to the secretary of war, impeaching the veracity of General Brown in a variety of instances, which he offered to prove, and demanded an inquiry. But a compliance with this fair claim, would not comport with the established system of corrupt intrigue. Col. Nicholas was promoted, the complaint stifled, and the General screened from public exposition; which was all that the moral justice of the executive of a republic deemed necessary. The same scene of *national honour and character* prevailed, in repelling the force of Commodore Chauncey's manly letter, and the recorded outrage of military honour and public justice in the case of Captain Joseph Treat.*

Case of Major Herkimer and the U. S volunteers.

There is another case not less remarkable, in which the voice of truth, and the honour and the feelings of a respectable officer and his corps, have experienced from Presi-

* See Appendix, No. V.

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dent Madison the same cold contempt. The gallant Major Herkimer, a relative of the revolutionary hero of the same name, made the complaint subjoined to the President of the United States, on the 1st July, 1813; and on the 19th their complaints were answered by the promotion of General Brown.

To the Hon. John Armstrong, Secretary of War.

"*Sackett's Harbour, July* 1st, 1813.

"Sir,

"The official communication of General Brown to the secretary of war, relative to the attack on this post by the enemy on the 29th May last, has at length made its appearance in the public prints. I am constrained, from a duty I owe to myself and the volunteers at present under my command, to state that the communication is so replete with incorrectness and misrepresentations, as to astonish all who were present and eye witnesses to the engagement. I feel sensible, Sir, that every officer of rank ought to be treated with respect, so long as he gives those their due who are placed under his command; *but when an officer will for self-aggrandizement, or the hope of promotion, stoop to meanness—thereby injuring the reputation and feelings of those who have volunteered their services to their country at an enormous sacrifice, and who are and have been willing at all times to undergo the fatigues and deprivations of a campaign, his conduct merits the most pointed animadversion.*

"I shall now proceed to state, in as concise a manner as the nature of the case will admit of, the transactions.

"On the evening of the 28th May, General Brown came to Horse Island, (where the volunteers were stationed) and ordered Colonel Mills, (who then commanded the volunteers,) that in case of an attack from the enemy, to retreat immediately from the island and join him and the militia on the main land, immediately opposite the island, near one mile distant from the Harbour, (where the regular troops were stationed,) and in case the enemy were too powerful, to retreat into the woods,

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form and keep up a retreating fire until joined by the regulars.

"At daybreak on the morning of the 29th, the enemy were discovered to make for the island with their shipping and boats; Colonel Mills immediately ordered the regiment to be formed, which being done he marched them off the island and joined General Brown with his militia.

"It will be necessary here to observe, that the volunteer regiment at this time consisted of not more than 150 effective men.

"Having joined the General, we were ordered to take our stand on the margin of the lake, where the enemy were obliged to land; the militia on our left and rear. It is true that General Brown ordered the volunteers to reserve their fire until every shot should hit its object. In this particular he was punctually obeyed; not a gun was fired until the enemy had come within 60 paces, when Colonel Mills ordered the men to fire; they commenced firing, and discharged their pieces from three to four times each, until the enemy were within three rods of our line. *Not a man of the volunteer corps had left his post or had the most distant idea of retreating, if it can be judged correctly from appearances. At this time, Colonel Mills very prudently ordered a retreat; not, however, before it was discovered that the principal part of the militia had retreated into the woods.*

"The volunteers having ceased firing, did not retreat in that perfect order that could be wished. This, however, was impracticable, owing to the trees and bushes being cut down in the woods last winter, to prevent the enemy (in case of an attack) from making a rapid descent upon the Harbour, in consequence of which, some of the men got scattered, but principally all joined after getting through the woods. *On the retreat, Colonel Mills received a ball through his left breast, and almost instantly died.*

"The volunteers, agreeably to orders, retreated to the woods, formed, and kept up a retreating fire, until they

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joined the regulars and some militia, at the upper end of the barracks, where they fought, excepting part of two companies, who were ordered to join some of the remaining militia on our left, until the enemy retreated.

"Thus, Sir, I have given you a brief and concise statement of facts, which *I presume General Brown will not undertake to deny, and should he, it shall be satisfactorily proven.*

"It is impossible, Sir, to describe the feelings of the volunteers on this occasion, whose objects were strictly to attend to their duty, both in and out of the field. *Besides the foregoing mistatements, General Brown has committed others, which, whether done through malice or ignorance, are unpardonable,* alluding particularly to the killed, wounded and missing; *it is impossible that the General in this instance could be mistaken, being furnished by myself* with a return of the killed, wounded, and missing. He states in his official communication, that *one* man of the volunteers only *was killed,* whereas *four were killed; nor does he make mention of the wound which the brave Captain Collins received through his shoulder with a musket ball, although the General frequently spoke to Captain Collins on the subject of his wound,* and with whom he was intimately acquainted. Of the missing, a number were taken prisoners and carried to Canada, which we have since learnt from one of the volunteers, who was sent back from Kingston, owing to the wounds he received in the engagement.

"The General forgets, in his zeal to do justice to a few of the regulars, to make the smallest mention of the exertions of our patriotic few, who withstood the attack of the enemy, and is totally silent with respect to the militia, whom he so bitterly condemned the day after the action, *but from recent occurrences, it is to be presumed he was taught what to write.*

"It will be recollected, that from the British official account, and from our own observations, that the enemy landed from 1000 to 1500 regular troops, the flower of the British army. No officer in his common senses,

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would have considered it prudent to have made longer resistance at this place, unless speedily reinforced, (of which there was not the smallest prospect) than the volunteers did.

"It behoves every commanding officer, under those circumstances, to report to the secretary of war, the transactions as they have occurred. *Why the General, or for what reason has made no mention of Majors Laval,* (the commandant of the dragoons on foot) who first entered the woods, and *Aspinwall of the regulars, and some others who fought with the utmost bravery, is best known to himself.* The General has laboured to stigmatize the volunteer regiment as much as possible, *and not knowing how to do it with truth on his side, he has resorted to a mean and incorrect statement,* as is well known to every officer and soldier who were present during the action, and well known to the General himself. It can be satisfactorily proven in the most solemn manner, *that the General did say after the battle, that the volunteers had fought well and done their duty; and why this wilful and malicious slander, is best known to himself.* He has wounded the feelings of both officers and soldiers, who are conscious they have done their duty, and bore the severities of the battle; he has disheartened them by classing them with the militia, calling them raw troops unaccustomed to subordination.

"In order to refute this charge, I appeal to Generals Dearborn and Chandler, both of whom have had command at this post, and inspected the volunteers, and pronounced them under as good discipline and subordination, as any of the regulars who were in the Harbour. The brave General Pike, likewise, (were he living) would give him the *lie* on that point; he was anxious to have the volunteer regiment attached to his brigade, and go with him on his first expedition, there not being room enough in the fleet for the whole corps, only a part went, who were noticed for their brave conduct, because it was their good fortune to fight under generals, who were willing to give credit to all who deserved it; we were un-

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fortunate, *it was our misfortune* (in a time which tried men's souls) *to be placed under the command of a militia general undisciplined.*

"JOHN HERKIMER, *Major, Com'g. U. S. volunteers.*

"We, the undersigned officers in the United States volunteer regiment, do certify, that we were in the engagement alluded to in the foregoing statement, and that it is substantially correct.

"SAM'L. PARSONS, *Adjutant.*
"THOS. COLLINS, *Captain.*
"JOHN PHILIPS, *do.*
"GILES KELLOGG, *do.*
"CHESTER GRISWOLD, *do.*
"DAVID MOYER, *do.*
"ALEX'N. DUNLAP, *do.*
"I. H. MARSHALL, *Lieut. U. S. vol.*
"JOHN FURMAN, *do.*
"JOHN F. WENDALL, *do.*
"JAMES PARKER, *do.*
"JOSEPH WOOD, *do.*
"CURTISS THORP, *2d Lieut.*"

After a perusal of these facts, selected from many others, let it be remembered and recorded in every patriot bosom, that Major-general Brown was selected by President Madison and the secretary of war, "for his approved moral character," not only to take the command of the army of the United States, but *O most odious outrage of common decency!* they appointed him to preside at a conclave of junior officers, with authority to decide upon the military character and merits of men, who had grown grey in the public service, and were defending the interests of their country, while he was notoriously employed in violating its laws, for the advancement of his private fortune.

The process for reducing the army bears a remarkable contrast, with the avowed purposes of Congress,

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the spirit of the government, and the professions of the executive. Never was there a departure from the intention of the government and the letter of the law, more glaring or more preposterous. The duty which the constitution assigns to the executive magistrate, has been by the usage of late years, parcelled out to agents never contemplated at the formation of the government; and this has begotten a system of sub-delegation in several successive stages, until the form of the government totally disappears, and the worst features of despotism regulate and determine the most important public concerns. However judicious it might have been to have placed in the hands of the superior officers of the army, the selection of those whose talents, services and worth were most useful to the country; yet in this case General Brown's incompetency was well understood: his artificial popularity might be profitably used, and therefore he was called on to perform a part, which had been previously prepared for him at the war office; he was a mere counter for the play of political gamblers; but another auxiliary was absolutely necessary to give shape and plausibility to the works of a band of military empirics, and therefore the exterior functions of the war ministry were united with those of the public treasury, in the person of the honourable A. J. Dallas, esq. This gentleman as chancellor of the exchequer, had already excited universal admiration by the display of fiscal talents, and it was deemed necessary, that he should supply the defects of the military board, and the want of dexterity in the minister whom he had relieved from responsibility On the seventeenth of May, 1815, he issued from the war office an official paper, uniting more plausibility and determined insincerity, than can be found perhaps on the records of our government. It is in governments worn out by vice and age, that such polished hypocrisy is the common currency; it was an unusual refinement upon premeditated insult, which flattered a gallant body of men for their generosity and their valour, and in the next breath sacrificed the best to the passions

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and interests of the very worst of men. By such means has the honourable profession of arms been indelibly stained, and the purity of a republic tarnished, to reward the devotion of flatterers and political instruments, and to sustain the projects of a half disguised and grinding oligarchy. Thus the soldier's honour, once the emblem of chastity, has been polluted by the association of impure agents, to smooth the path which leads to the chief magistracy of a representative republic. I ask pardon of my readers for this digression, and for the feelings which the course of my reflections have irresistibly called forth. Where the honour of his country is compromitted, the sensibility of every true American is awakened and warmed, but particularly that of a citizen of the revolution: I have yielded to a dutiful impulse, and will now resume my narrative.

I have heard it alleged in different quarters, as the opinion of some persons whom I highly respect, that although it is admitted, that great faults have been committed in the military operations on the straits of Niagara, in the campaign of 1814; that although it may be shewn, that misrepresentations have been studiously and artfully employed, in the place of truth, as they respect both men and measures; yet as the events altogether have exalted the military character of the country, and expanded the national fame, it would be impolitic, to strip the mask from the face of imposture, or to call the public attention to the simplicity of historical truth. I cannot however subcribe to these opinions, because an exposition will not impair that which does not depend upon false representations, and which is the more securely and honourably established when truth and justice form its basis. The casuists of the present day appear to have forgotten that the war of the revolution, and the armies led by Washington, had not only established our *national renown*, but resisted and even *vanquished* the force of Great Britain. It is therefore essential to the national safety and honour, as well as to the cause of justice, which never shrinks from

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the light of truth, that the competency of their servants should be well understood by the people, to the end that public trust may be safely deposited; and whatever may be the spirit or temper of the times, five years strict investigation of my own character and conduct, have taught me to consign concealments to those, who aspire to place and power by indirect means, and are content to enjoy the fruits of their aspirations, by the sacrifice of that manly independence, which I appreciate above all the honours and riches of a vain transitory existence.

With these principles for my guide, I shall enter upon the developement of the occurrences in the north in 1814, with a sincere desire to impart to the reader, without prejudice or bias, the facts and incidents which have been reported to me, and are deemed worthy of credit; begging him to bear in mind, that I write from the information of men, whose veracity I have no cause to question.

Reasons assigned for breaking up the camp at French Mills.

I have in the preceding part of this chapter cited an order from the war department of the 20th Jan. 1814, under the express authority of the President, by which the cantonment at the French Mills was precipitately broken up, on the pretence of a regard to the safety of the troops and to ulterior operations, which afterwards appeared to be the immediate *defence* of Sackett's Harbour, or the *attack* of Kingston from that place. General Brown marched from the French Mills on the 13th Feb. with a corps of about 2000 men *of his own selection*, and as the secretary of war soon after took him under his especial orders, nothing worthy of note fell under my own observation. But on the 9th of March, General Brown stated to a subordinate officer, that he had received orders from General Armstrong, to move with his division *from* Sackett's Harbour, and invest Fort Niagara; that he was to be joined there by Colonel Scott, and that Governor Tompkins was to co-operate with 5000 militia. The same officer was immediately despatched to Albany, in quest of munitions of war, with orders to report himself to Colonel Scott, and to make known to him all the wants of the division; and in case he (Scott) should not

General Brown receives the especial protection of the secretary.

Despatches an officer to Albany

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on a particular service

have received his instructions from the war department, then the officer was to reveal to Governor Tompkins the movements and expectations of the General; in the mean time the troops were trudging on towards Niagara through frost and snow and mud and water. On arriving at Albany, General Brown's messenger found Colonel Scott was not in the secret, and that his excellency was equally ignorant of the project of the march upon Niagara. In this state of embarrassment, the officer received an order from General Brown, bearing date the 21st of March, to post back to Sackett's Harbour, to which place the corps to which he belonged was retrograding; and a few days after he received another letter from the General, dated the 26th, commanding him to repair forthwith to Batavia. To account for these apparent caprices, this ludicrous but woful marching and countermarching, it will be necessary to raise the veil of mystery, and expose to the reader the orders of the secretary of war to General Brown, contained in the following letters, which have been handed to me as being substantially if not literally correct; and are under those circumstances, submitted to the public, in the belief that they can produce no harm, and may serve as a lesson to *young generals*.

"*War Department, Feb. 21st*, 1814.

A peep at General Brown's orders.

"Public sentiment will no longer tolerate the possession of Fort Niagara by the enemy. You will therefore move the division which you brought from French Mills, and invest that post. Governor Tompkins will co-operate with you with 5000 militia, and Colonel Scott, who is to be made a brigadier, will join you. You will receive your instructions at Onondaga hollow."

The above was inclosed in another letter from General Armstrong, the contents of which are as follow.

"*War Department, Feb. 21st*, 1814.

"You will immediately consult with Commodore Chauncey, about the readiness of the fleet for a descent

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on Kingston, the moment the ice leaves the lake. If he deems it practicable, and you think you have troops enough to carry it, you will attempt the expedition.

"In such an event, you will use the inclosed as a *ruse de guerre*."

From these orders, the mistake appears to have been a natural one; for as General Brown well knew that the attack of Kingston with his force would have been Quixotic, he might fairly conclude that the secretary's letter on that subject, was mere matter of *badinage*; and besides, as the lake was not generally free for navigation before the 20th of April, he had time enough before him to take Niagara, and be ready for Kingston in good season. The General, however, although his army was to defend Sackett's Harbour or attack Kingston, mistook the false point of attack for the real one, and marched away to Onondaga hollow; where, having waited four days for the promised instructions, without receiving any, he began to suspect that there must be some mistake, and finally submitted his despatches, as I am informed, to Colonel Gaines, whose mental optics being organised differently from those of the General, he detected the error; whereupon our commander immediately countermarched his division to Sackett's Harbour. This retrograde movement perplexed the newsmongers; and whether it was from the sneers which appeared in the public prints, or what other cause I know not, General Brown, soon after his return to the Harbour, once more set off for the westward, and made good his march to Buffaloe.

Not long after his arrival at his new station, I am informed General Brown received a laconic note from the secretary of war, of the following import:—"*You have committed a great mistake, but the first duty of a young general is to profit from his blunders. You have permission to remain at Niagara.*" Far removed from the right and centre of the army, General Brown was now left to form his troops, *and to project expeditions*, until about the 15th

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of June, when I understand he received another letter from the secretary of war, to the following effect: "*You have permission to carry Fort Erie, and beat up the enemy's quarter's at Chippewa; but in case his fleet gets the control of Lake Ontario, you are immediately to recross the strait.*" If this information be correct, and I shall believe it until it is disproved, or if it be substantially correct, the community will be enabled to estimate the providence which directed, and the objects and ends proposed to be attained by this expedition into Upper Canada; whereby 1500 or 2000 brave men and several officers of conspicuous worth, were lost to their country and their families; *and after many efforts of distinguished valour, drawn forth by self defence only, terminated precisely where it began*; with the slaughter of three or four thousand of the human species, and the *exaltation* of a few individuals!—and for what?—*merely for resisting courageously the dangers which they had themselves voluntarily sought, with no other visible motive but to measure strength with the enemy.* All the high titled honours, lavish eulogiums, and servile adulation which succeeded those scenes of heedless, headlong carnage, were contrived by self love and fostered by political artifice, to dazzle the multitude, and delude the public judgment, by a display of events, which, when stripped of false colourings and examined on their naked merits, must be ascribed more to the ignorance of the enemy, than to the skill of our own generals; unless, indeed, personal intrepidity and matchless resolution be converted into military skill—for therein the American soldier emulated the conduct of his ancestors at Bennington, at King's Mountain, Stoney Point, Paulus' Hook, the Cowpens and Eutaw.

Result of the expedition into Canada, and reflections thereon.

This view of transactions which have been celebrated with enthusiasm, may not be acceptable to every palate; but as an independent citizen of these states, deeply interested in their future fortunes; as a man who in his adversity can hold himself above patronage, popularity, or the favour of faction, I shall with my humble means unceasingly oppose the current of corruption, which me-

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naces the constitution, and if not seasonably checked, will leave to the citizen little more than the forms of the government.

I despise mystery, intrigue and hypocrisy, and ardently desire to see imposture deprived of its mask, and artificial characters stripped of their borrowed plumes. I have therefore, in the exposition of abuses, unhesitatingly disclosed whatever I have in my conscience believed to be true. The battalions who fought at Chippewa, at Bridgewater, and at Erie, earned much more distinction than they have received; the names of those corps should have been perpetuated on the peace establishment, without respect to numerical order; the old 1st, the 9th, the 21st, the 23d and the 25th regiments should never have been abolished; some mark of distinction should have been attached to their standards, and the men and officers should have been distinguished by medals and badges of honour. I do not recognise these particular corps to the exclusion of others, but because it was their fortune to be most prominent; the companies of artillery engaged on those occasions, should also have received some marks of permanent distinction. This would have had the effect to keep them always full, and would have been a guarantee of future glory; but such manly, liberal ideas did not accord with the narrow policy and corrupt intrigues of Mr. Madison and his counsellors; an electoral vote was of more value in their estimation, than the honour of the whole army; and certain officers were retained with reference to the influence of elections only In crossing the strait of Niagara as he did, General Brown played a desperate game of hazard, to which General Ripley was decidedly opposed: he committed the troops confided to his conduct, but the enemy outblundered him, and he was saved. It is true the public was amused with the idea, that this *expedition was intended against Fort George, against Burlington heights, and even against Kingston*, and General Brown's letters to the secretary of war and to Commodore Chauncey are calculated to countenance the imposition; but military men

Risk incurred by General Brown in crossing the strait of Niagara.

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knew that a corps of 3000 or 3500 combatants, without battering cannon, portable magazines, or even a baggage train, could neither carry on a siege, nor make extensive incursions into the territory of the enemy. Yet facts are necessary to inform the mass of society, and these were carefully concealed by the government.

I beg leave in this place to apprise the reader, that whenever *an order, official letter, or movement of General Brown is mentioned, it must be clearly understood, that such order, letter or movement received the sanction of Brigadier-general Scott;*—because, although General Brown possesses an unusual share of obstinacy and presumption, he was not insensible of General Scott's superior information and experience, and he was also aware that Scott, in a short campaign at Washington the preceding winter, *by commuting services with the war minister, and paying his court at the palace,* had established a dominant influence in the cabinet, which was perfectly understood by the army, and even manifested itself upon Governor Tompkins.

From the best information I possess, it appears, that General Brown crossed the strait of Niagara on the 2d and 3d of July, with about 3500 men; his first brigade directly from Black Rock, and the second crossing the arm of the lake, landed to the westward of Fort Erie, at two miles distance. This movement was attended with such a deficiency of transport, that I understand the first brigade and the artillery required several trips to cross the strait at Black Rock; and the second brigade could not land more than 100 men at a time.* Such was *his pro-*

Deficiency of transport.

* Extract from the statement of Major Noon, an officer of great responsibility:

"On the night of the 3d July, 1814, General Ripley crossed the Niagara with his brigade, above Fort Erie, and landed his men in good order, notwithstanding the embarrassing situation the General had been placed in for want of means of transportation, having only two gun boats and two small boats for the crossing of his whole brigade. The gun boats could not get nearer the Canada shore than about three quarters of a mile, and the small would not contain more than fifty men each. Fortunately for the General, the enemy made no

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vidence, and such the *efficiency* of the quarter-master's department. The enemy must necessarily have foreseen this movement, yet no measure was taken to prevent the descent, although General Rial, three days afterwards, felt himself sufficiently strong to attack Brown's combined force; and what is still more extraordinary, the British general left a garrison of 100 men at Fort Erie, which was in a defenceless condition, to surrender without resistance. Now as General Brown had been at Buffaloe near three months, forming and equipping his force for this expedition, surely the British general during that period, should have determined either to strengthen Fort Erie, or withdraw the garrison; he did neither, and of consequence sacrificed one hundred men, and gave confidence to the enemy; but if General Rial had masked his movements, and taken a position in the forest north of Fort Erie, within striking distance of General Brown's points of debarkation, he could have prevented the descent or cut him up in detail. Yet, although an intrepid soldier, he preferred his position at Chippawa, and suffered General Brown to land his whole force without opposition—Fort Erie surrendered after the ceremony of a few shot. The reader is referred to the Atlas, No. XV. for a view of the theatre of these operations.

The enemy's want of enterprise, and fall of Fort Erie.

I have not been able to discover what were General Brown's orders of march, battle, or encampment; but on the 4th he divided his forces, and ordered his first brigade with Towson's artillery, to advance on the enemy, unsupported by the second. This corps marched under Brigadier-general Scott by the main road on the margin of the river, and after some skirmishing took a position with Street's creek in his front and on his left, and the river on his right; the distance from the enemy one and an half miles, and from his main body, composed of the 2d brigade, the park, the New York and Pennsylvania

General Brown detaches less than half his force to advance on the whole force of the enemy.

resistance on our landing, or he must have lost a great number of his men, as he could not land at a time more than one hundred men.

"D. NOON, *Major 41st Infantry*

"*Albany, 18th March*, 1815."

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volunteers and the Indians, being about 15 miles. By this movement General Brown offered the enemy an advantage, of which he did not profit; being in possession of the country, with a horde of Indians and irregulars at his disposal, General Rial could have watched the movements of the 1st brigade, and advancing under cover of the forest on the left flank of that corps, he could have chosen his ground and attacked it under march, with great advantage; while the main body and the commander in chief were too remote to have afforded relief. But General Rial still kept his position behind Chippawa creek.—General Brown arrived at General Scott's camp at Street's creek, about midnight on the 4th July, and encamped in the dark.—Brigadier-general Porter with the volunteers and Indians, got up the next morning. By a reference to the diagram No. XI. the reader may be enabled to form some idea of this encampment, and of the action of the 5th July.

An opportunity presents to General Rial, by which he could have destroyed General Brown without a blow.

At this stage of the expedition an advantage was presented to the enemy, in its nature so obvious, so practicable, and so conclusive, that it seems wonderful, it should have escaped the observation of the British commander. By taking up the bridge of Chippawa he secured his front, and from the length and depth of that river, and the obstruction of the swamps which skirted it, General Brown could not, with his artillery, have been able to turn his exposed flank, in less than two or three days; in the mean time General Rial should have fallen back upon Queenstown, leaving behind him a light party to keep up appearances; the necessary field train should have been held in readiness at Fort Niagara, from whence a detachment should have been ordered up to Lewistown, to drive off parties of observation from its vicinity, and the artillery should have followed it. Boats should have been ordered up in the twilight from Fort George, and the British general, after night fall, should have crossed at Queenstown, and by an easy march, after detaching 500 men to the vicinity of Fort Schlosser, and posting videttes along the right bank of the river, to watch the motions of

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the American army; he might the next afternoon have found himself in quiet possession, of General Brown's unprotected magazines and heavy baggage at Buffaloe. The simplicity and facility of this operation requires no tactical knowledge for its comprehension; the route is explained on the map No. 15, by the road from Chippewa down to A, the passage of the river to C, and the march from thence by the great road to Buffaloe; which will be perfectly understood by every man, who can march down *one side* of a river, cross it at a given point, and march up on the other. And what would have been the effect of this change of positions? General Rial and the British corps would have subsisted on our magazines, whilst General Brown who had improvidently advanced upon the enemy, before he had made a depot of provisions in the invaded country, and depended on Buffaloe for his daily subsistence, without craft to recross the strait, would have been reduced to the sad alternative of surrendering at discretion, or attempting to make good his retreat to Detroit; by which he probably would have lost one-half of his men, and the residue would have been worn out and heart broken. The feasibility of this enterprise is apparent on the face of the map. The enemy could have magnified his numbers, a panic would have spread through the neighbouring settlements, and before a sufficient force could have been assembled and organized, to drive the invaders into their strong holds, at Niagara and Fort George, General Brown's fate would have been determined. But it pleased the Almighty to direct things otherwise, and the troops thus inconsiderately committed, were saved by the blind confidence and ignorance of the enemy; and shall the honour and interests of the United States be confided to such folly and temerity? forbid it Heaven! forbid it my country!

I will return to General Brown's encampment at Street's creek, to which I must call the particular attention of the reader. General Scott, under the orders of General Brown, and doubtless with his own approbation, for he controlled him, marching from fort Erie with his bri-

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The defects of the camp at Street's creek exposed.

gade, advanced upon the enemy, and to use the language of General Brown, "selected with the eye of a soldier," this ground of encampment; I require no other evidence of the inexperience and incapacity of the two chiefs, for the conduct of armies, than this movement and this camp; the movement exposed less than one-half of General Brown's little army to be fallen upon in flank, front or rear, after a fatiguing march, by the whole force of the enemy, reckoned to be double in number, the result of which might be readily anticipated; and as to the camp, it possessed no attribute of a judicious position, *offensive or defensive;* formed in a narrow fork made by the river and a deep miry creek, it was too contracted even to encamp either the first or second brigade in *alignement;* nor did it furnish room to form in order of battle, or to change front. It was liable to be turned on the left and attacked in rear, without being able to make a counter movement, unless by passing a defile* in front, or plunging through mud and water to the armpits on the left.† It was, moreover, subject to be cannonaded in front and flank by light detachments, without the power to resent the insult but by general movements in the same direction. The guards were hemmed in by the enemy from the adjacent forest, whose shot entered the camp; in short it was exposed to attack on three sides, and was free to action by the rear only; and to defend it the troops would have been obliged to march and seek positions beyond their guards. Such was the camp of Street's creek, agreeably to the information I have been able to collect from General Brown's despatches, and several authentic sources, conformably to which, the diagram No. XI.‡ was projected. To relieve the camp from the reiterated in-

* The bridge across Street's creek.

† The same creek on the left which was found to be impassable to horses by the second brigade, and bathed the men to the armpits in their passage of it.

‡ This diagram is imperfect, but will serve to convey a general idea of the action; Scott's brigade was extended to the left, and Major Jesup's battalion was thrown in to the edge of the wood.

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sults of the enemy's irregulars, Brigadier-general Porter of the militia, with about 800 volunteers and Indians, and a detachment of 80 men from the second brigade under that intrepid and intelligent officer Captain W. Macdonald, was ordered to advance from the rear, under cover of the forest, and to fall on their light parties. General Porter advanced, and about the point at the crossed swords, see diagram No. 11, he surprised a body of Indians who appeared to be in consultation; they immediately gave way, but keeping up a brisk skirmish, retreating to *a a a*, where they were strongly reinforced by the enemy's troops, who in turn forced Porter to retreat. Captain Macdonald fell back to *c*, but was soon obliged to leap a fence and form in *d*, from whence he descried the right of the main body of the enemy advancing at *f*, before whom, his party being worn down by the engagement with the enemy's irregulars, he retired to camp.

General Porter advances and drives in a party of the enemy's Indians.

Pending these operations and whilst Porter was warmly engaged with the British troops, Generals Brown and Ripley casually met near Treat's house *i*, and the latter observed that Porter ought to be supported, as he conceived, from the firing, he must be engaged with the regular troops of the enemy, which the latter appeared to question; General Scott riding up at the instant, Brown communicated Ripley's idea to him, which he scouted and observed, that with 200 men he would beat the whole of the enemy who were engaged; Brown however thought it advisable to be prepared, and directed Scott to turn out his brigade, and the order had scarcely been delivered, before the advance of the enemy was discovered. Captain Towson, who was attached to the first brigade with three pieces, and was encamped at K, with the decision which marks the character of this gallant officer, immediately crossed the bridge and taking a station near the river, opened his battery on the enemy before Scott's line was formed.

Meeting of Generals Brown and Ripley, who were afterwards joined by General Scott.

I understand the first brigade was forming for evening exercise, when the order was given, and yet the enemy

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The defects of the camp illustrated.

Battle of Street's creek.

was so close upon the camp, that he opened his battery and killed a number of men, as the column crossed the bridge in front; here the *vigilance* of the two chiefs and the *excellence* of the camp is demonstrated beyond cavil;* because it is a matter of fact, that to defend it, Gen. Scott was compelled to pass a defile in the face of the enemy, and wheeling to his left between Street's house and barn, *h*, *i*, he passed down a lane and formed in order of battle in *e*, with an impracticable creek in his rear; since war became an art, surely, there never was a more unmilitary disposition; for if he had been overpowered by the enemy, and the disparity of force warranted the conclusion, his men who could not have escaped by the bridge, must have surrendered on the field, been cut to pieces or dispersed; and if it be really true, as is believed, that the enemy outnumbered the American line 600 men, and had taken their ground, while General Scott was crossing the bridge, no military man will dispute, that had they advanced without a halt, and resolutely appealed to the bayonet, the first brigade must have sunk beneath their superior weight, which would have cut short General Brown's career, and with it terminated this campaign of errors and accidents. It happened otherwise, and fortunately for the American army, General Rial to the blunder of *giving* battle, added that of not closing with his adversary without a pause. General Scott advanced with great intrepidity, although outflanked, after his intervals had been extended to four-fold distance, and the two lines when approximated within short musket shot, resorted to the effect of their fire, in which the American soldier, *from* the habits of early life, will always excel; a warm, close and bloody conflict of small arms and field artillery en-

* I would recommend to the young officer to compare this encampment with that of Major-general Izard, in the vicinity, the 14th October, 1814; and to bear in mind that they were both offensive camps, or intended as such; and he may be able to distinguish between sound knowledge and boastful pretensions, between the man of science and the quack.

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sued, in which it was the good fortune of the gallant Towson, to silence the enemy's chief battery; at this critical juncture, General Rial took the resolution, which should have directed his conduct in the onset; he determined to decide the contest with the bayonet, and commenced his charge, when Towson, relieved from the pressure of the opposed battery, found himself at leisure to turn his guns, and scour the adverse line with showers of canister. This oblique attack of the artillery and the perpendicular fire of the American line was insupportable, and valourous troops yielded the palm and retreated precipitately, leaving their killed and wounded on the field, but carrying off their artillery; comparing small with great things, here, as at Minden, the fate of the day was settled by the artillery, and the American Towson may deservedly be ranked, with the British Philips, Drummond and Foy.

Captain Towson distinguished.

This was an obstinate contest, fought on a plain and in *direct order*, the simplicity of which presents few occasions for the display of tactical skill; it was literally a trial of strength and courage, breast to breast, in which the American arms triumphed. Brigadier-general Scott led his corps to the attack with conspicuous gallantry, in which he was supported by three field officers,* of whom it is no disparagement of the General, to say, they were his inferiors in nought, but the accidental circumstance of rank. The contest for glory was ardent and uniform, from the ranks to the brigadier. But I understand it was Major Jesup's fortune to be most closely engaged; pressed in front and flank, he found it necessary to appeal to the bayonet and his antagonist recoiled.

General Scott's gallantry displayed.

A just tribute to Majors Jesup, Leavenworth & M'Neil.

Much honour was due to all actively engaged in this sanguinary affair; but the exaggerated accounts of it, have so far exceeded the bounds of modesty, and have been so bloated by artifice, as to excite the disgust rather than the admiration of military judges. To the *battle of*

* Majors Jesup, Leavenworth and M'Neil.

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Chippewa and the *"signal victory,"** which attended it, a stranger would attach the idea of *embattled hosts contending for an empire;* when in fact General Scott's line consisted of barely 1,100 men and a company of artillery, a colonel's command; whilst the enemy have been estimated, and it is believed correctly, at 1,700; now if the people of these states, were the most effeminate dastardly wretches on the globe; if a battle had never before been fought or won in the country; there could not have been more puerile exultation or noisy boasting on the occasion. In the revolutionary war, when a whole army was compelled to lay down its arms, after repeated bloody conflicts, we behold the Congress of the United States, content to bestow a medal on the victorious chief only. Nor, after the successful operations of the combined forces of France and the United States, under the command of General Washington, in the capture of the British army under Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown, do we find a single

Rewards of the revolutionary war compared with those lavished in the late one.

* Various and opposite accounts have been given of this action, as will appear by the following extracts, the last of which proves the writer's unhappy propensity to slander.

Extract from General Brown's official letter to the secretary of war, dated July 7th, 1814.

"I sent Colonel Gardner to order General Ripley to advance with the 21st regiment, which formed *part of the reserve, pass to the left of our camp,* skirt the wood so as to keep out of view, and fall upon the rear of the enemy's right flank. This order was promptly obeyed and the greatest exertions were made by the 21st regiment to gain their position and close with the enemy, but in vain."

The following was stated by Major Buckner, late of the army, in the presence of several gentlemen, at O'Neil's hotel in Washington, in June or July, 1815, as part of the contents of a letter addressed by General Scott to *a friend* in Virginia, which was read at Dunwiddie court-house.

"If Ripley had obeyed his orders, which could only have been prevented by the damnedest cowardice, not a man of the shattered battalions of the enemy would have effected his escape."

If this is to be called a "signal victory," as General Scott describes it, what appropriate epithet shall we find for Marengo, Austerlitz, Leipsic, New Orleans, and Waterloo? Signal victories produce effects.

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brevet or medal and but one sword conferred, although redoubts were carried at the point of the bayonet; and at Eutaw, compared with which, the conflict of Street's creek was the affair of a picket, we behold a solitary medal and a sword only, voted to the brave army which crossed bayonets with the enemy, and drove him from the field.

In those days the consciousness of performing one's duty, was the richest reward the soldier could receive, but now, swords, medals, and brevets, have become the subjects of executive intrigue or factious compromise, and by their indiscriminate application have lost their distinction, and like unqualified and undeserved praise pass but at the market price. And wherefore this revolution in the sentiment, policy, and practice of our national councils? At that time the cause of the revolution formed the paramount motive of action; now, alas! how fallen are we, the interests of an election, the purchase of partizans, and the preservation of place and power, supersede all sense of regard to the public weal, and send forth the taints of corruption, to the extremest bounds of executive influence; but reader, for an answer to this specific case, I would refer you to the diagram No. 17, and the flying cabinet.

Major-general Brown's conduct in this action.

But what was the conduct of General Brown, pending this critical scene, in which victory balanced for many minutes? Overwhelmed by the weight of his responsibility, and distracted by the magnitude of the trust, without practice or experience to guide him, like a mariner on the tempestuous ocean without a compass, he was at a loss what course to pursue, and therefore remained irresolute and undetermined; consigning the first brigade to its fate, he exposed himself to be beat in detail; whilst by a simple movement of the second brigade,* which he held inactive, he could have crushed the enemy in ten minutes, and made every living man a prisoner. Gene-

* General Brown in his official letter of July 7th, calls this brigade his *reserve*. He made it such for the occasion it is presumed, as it formed one half of his regular force.

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General Scott's conduct approved.

ral Rial blindly offered him this advantage, but he still more blind knew not how to improve it. For one whole hour did the combat rage, victory hang in suspense, and brave men fight and fall and bleed and die, until they conquered; then and not till then, when co-operation ceased to be necessary, the gallant Biddle and Ritchie were permitted with their batteries to support Towson, and General Ripley was ordered to march; but before he reached *o o*, (see the Diagram) the enemy were put to flight. Yet in his official communications, General Brown endeavours to impose on his government the idea, that *he* had fought this affair with great skill and conduct, and was entitled to the unmerited honours and fulsome adulation which he has received from an honest but deluded people; and should such imposture escape exposition?—Forbid it patriotism! forbid it justice! Attempts have been made to derogate from the good conduct of General Scott on this occasion, because the pursuit was not promptly pressed; but this is unjust, as no man who has been on a field of battle, would have expected such service from a corps, exhausted by the severest toil to which the human frame can be exposed, and after more than one fourth of its number had been killed and wounded.

The following returns exhibit the killed, wounded and missing on this occasion, in which the great disparity can be accounted for only by the superior fire of the American infantry and artillery; yet in proportion to the numbers engaged the loss was nearly equal, being somewhat more than every fourth man; but the smallness of General Scott's loss in officers gave him a great advantage, and is indeed remarkable; exceeding in the total that of Colonel Van Rensselaer* at the attack of Queenstown, three only, and not equalling it in deaths.

* Having omitted in its proper place, I will here particularise, that it was the grenadier and light companies of the 49th regiment, which opposed Colonel Van Rensselaer's landing, they were 175 strong, commanded by Captains Dennie and Williams, who were both wounded, and had three sergeants and thirty-nine rank and file killed and wounded. This from an official return taken at York.

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Variance between General Brown and General Porter's accounts noticed.

This account is founded on the best information I have been able to procure; but it may not be in all its parts minutely correct; because I have perceived a variance even in the orders and reports of General Brown and General Porter, touching this affair. The former in his official report of the 7th of July to the secretary of war, employs the following language: "*By this time General Porter's command had given way, and fled in every direction, notwithstanding his personal gallantry and great exertions to stay their* FLIGHT. The retreat of the volunteers and Indians caused the left flank of General Scott's brigade to be greatly exposed." But General Porter in his report to General Brown, bearing date the 16th of the same month, speaks of the volunteers in terms of the highest eulogium: "The action of Chippawa," says this meritorious militia officer, "in which the volunteers took so conspicuous a part, will ever be remembered to the honour of the American arms. It was commenced by 800 Pennsylvania volunteers and Indian warriors, who met about the same number of British militia and Indians, overthrew and drove them behind the main line of the British army, destroying at least 150, and *annihilating* it is believed this description of the enemy's force." In short, the brigadier is satisfied "the whole corps (volunteers and Indians) *will continue to distinguish its lf by its courage and good conduct.*" It might be considered invidious in me to contrast these paragraphs, which are taken from Niles's Weekly Register; I therefore leave them to the comments of the reader, and shall close this chapter with two other extracts from General Brown's official letter of the 7th July to the secretary of war.

Gen. Brown having detached Gen. Scott with his brigade from Fort Erie, on the 4th July, to advance upon the enemy, and "*to select a good military position for the night,*" overtakes him within one and a half miles of the enemy, about midnight, and lays down, it appears from Captain Treat's trial, without the ordinary precautions in stationing his guards; leaving that officer to hunt for, and find

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the army, and as I am anxious that no officer should remain under my command who can be suspected of cowardice, I advise that Captain Treat, with Lieutenant ——— (Morrow), who was also with the picket, be struck from the rolls of the army.*" This conduct of General Brown towards Captain Treat and Lieutenant Morrow, exhibits an affected sensibility for the honour of the troops intrusted to his command; but in the very attempt to establish pretensions to that feeling, he has shewn himself entirely destitute of it; under his sudden exaltation, it would have become General Brown to have doubted his own judgment, and restrained the natural domination of his spirit. In attempting to ruin by the stroke of his pen, the characters of two meritorious officers, whose conduct he had but partially viewed, and of which he ought to have felt himself an incompetent judge, he betrayed utter ignorance of that magnanimity, which ought to distinguish exalted commanders, in their treatment of their inferiors; but in seeking to establish pretensions to sensibilities to which he had no claim, he stained the general orders of the army by a black-blooded libel on an officer, who was aiding his elevation, and whom he sought to sacrifice, for the purpose of surreptitiously obtaining a character, which he ought to have known can only be derived from noble and virtuous actions. On the second day after the transaction, the General officially informs the secretary of war, that he "*ordered Captain Treat on the spot to retire from the army;*" but it is positively proved on the Captain's trial by several witnesses, that General Brown, "*on the spot, ordered Captain Treat to march his guard into the wood, in pursuit of the enemy,*" which he did with promptitude, directly to the place from whence he had been fired on; and that he penetrat-

Reflections on this letter.

General Brown detected in another falsehood.

* It happened fortunately for this officer that he had a brother in Congress; and as the secretary of war was courting popularity in the state of Ohio, he deemed it expedient to expunge the name; and in this way President Madison and his minister could expose or protect, elevate or depress, individuals, as their policy or resentments might dictate.


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determined purpose; but how was the General without a bridge, and without pontoons to cross a river 60 yards wide and unfordable, in the face of a gallant enemy? Let military men decide.


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ral Scott's conduct and ignorance exposed.—Operations of General Scott according to the statement of Colonel Leavenworth.—Action continued, and rule for retreating fulfilled.—Reflections on the conduct of General Rial and General Scott.—Testimony of Captain M'Donald, and a glance at a court of enquiry.—This testimony examined and applied.—General Ripley advances on his own responsibility contrary to orders.—Determines to carry the enemy's battery, for which service he orders Colonel Miller with the 21st regiment.—Particular conduct of the second brigade.—General Brown's injudicious order.—Ripley's salutary decision.—Movement of the second brigade.—Colonel Miller carries the battery of the enemy and is supported by the 23d regiment.—Major Riddle's report.—Information of Leavenworth, Crawford, Sawyer and Thompson.—Information of Major Riddle.—Formation of the American line in Lundy's Lane.—Ripley requests orders from Brown respecting the captured artillery.—Second charge of the enemy.—General Scott's second movement.—His third position.—Third charge of the enemy.—Conduct of General Brown and the executive.—General Scott's conduct in the action of Lundy's Lane.—General Scott makes a charge in column.—Passes between the ranks of the contending armies.—The fourth combat.—Testimony of Captain M'Donald again referred to.—General Brown and President Madison.—General Scott seeks an adventure on the left.—He succeeds no better than on the right.—Estimated strength of General Scott's consolidated battalion, after the first charge.—A contrast of military merits.—General Scott's second charge.—His troops are broken and retire.—General Brown wounded.—General Scott wounded.—Final disposition of the consolidated battalion of General Scott.—Particular conduct of General Brown in the action of Lundy's Lane.—His orders to Colonel Hindman.—Critical situation of the American troops.—General Brown's order to General Ripley.—Cause and effects of the affair at Lundy's Lane.—Extraordinary order of General Brown to General Ripley, with reflections thereon.—Recantation of General


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gant and incoherent letter to Commodore Chauncey, on which the Commodore's answer is the best commentary, that can be made.* If this letter was not intended mere-

* *Extract of a letter from Major-general Brown to Commodore Chauncey, dated Queenstown, July 13th, 1814.*

"All accounts agree that the force of the enemy in Kingston is very light. Meet me on the lake shore, north of Fort George, with your fleet, and we will be able, I have no doubt, to settle a plan of operation that will break the power of the enemy in Upper Canada, and *that in the course of a short time.*

"At all events let me hear from you, I have looked for your fleet with the greatest anxiety since the 10th. I do not doubt my ability to meet the enemy in the field, and to march in any direction over his country; your fleet carrying for me the necessary supplies. *We can threaten Forts George and Niagara and carry Burlington Heights and York,* AND PROCEED DIRECT TO KINGSTON AND CARRY THAT PLACE. For God's sake let me see you, *Sir James will not fight,* two of his vessels are now in Niagara river.

"If you conclude to meet me at the head of the lake, and that immediately, have the goodness to bring the guns and troops that I have ordered from the Harbour; at all events, have the politeness to let me know, what aid I am to expect from the fleet of Lake Ontario.

"There is not a doubt resting in my mind but that we have between us, the command of sufficient means to conquer Upper Canada within two months, if there is a prompt and zealous co-operation, and a vigorous application of these means. Now is our time before the enemy can be greatly reinforced."

Extract of a letter from Commodore Chauncey to Major-general Brown, dated U. S. ship Superior, off Kingston, August 10th, 1814.

"From the tenor of your letter, it would appear that you had calculated much upon the co-operation of the fleet. You cannot surely have forgotten the conversation we held on this subject at Sackett's Harbour previous to your departure for Niagara. I then professed to feel it my duty, as well as my inclination, to afford every assistance in my power to the army and to co-operate with it whenever it could be done without losing sight of the great object, for the attainment of which this fleet had been created, to wit, the capture or destruction of the enemy's fleet; but I then distinctly stated to you, that this was a primary object, and would be first attempted; and that you must not expect the fleet at the head of the lake, unless that of the enemy should induce us to follow him there.

"I will not suffer myself to believe that this conversation was misunderstood, or has since been forgotten. How then shall I account for the intimation thrown out to the public in your despatch to the


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fore the enemy can be greatly reinforced;" and where were these reinforcements expected from? necessarily from Kingston 200 miles in General Brown's front, over a difficult road the greatest part of the way, and on the direct route to Montreal, where reinforcements had arrived and were weekly arriving from Europe; nay, on the very day General Brown wrote this letter, it is susceptible of proof, that Lieutenant-general Drummond was on the march from Kingston with a strong reinforcement, which reached the vicinity of Fort George, on the twenty-fourth of July; yet General Brown proposes to Commodore Chauncey to "THREATEN FORT GEORGE, NIAGARA, AND CARRY BURLINGTON HEIGHTS, YORK, AND PROCEED DIRECT TO KINGSTON AND CARRY THAT PLACE;" and in this summary mode, he disposes of the fortified places of the enemy, as if they were bound to respect his summons; but if the reader will cast his eyes over any correct map of Upper Canada, and connect Queenstown and Kingston in the same view, he will be enabled to form a fair estimate of the incompetency of this officer who had been intrusted with the life of the soldier and the public safety. In another part of the same letter, the General says, "*I do not doubt my ability to meet the enemy in the field, and to march in any direction over their country,*" and with the co-operation of the squadron, which, according to Commodore Chauncey and agreeably to the topography of the country, could not have rendered any essential aid to the operations of the army, General Brown *gallantly* proposed, "*to conquer Upper Canada in two months,*" and all these feats were to be performed by 2700 regular troops, and 800 volunteers and Indians, without the necessary artillery* or munitions of war.

But on the 14th July, while the army lay at Queenstown, General Brown received advice, that General Rial with

* General Brown in his letter to General Izard, as late as the 11th of September, speaks doubtingly of the capacity of his artillery to reduce Niagara, and General Izard in his letter to the secretary of war, October 16th, is explicitly in the negative.

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with his depot, and at the same time defend his line of circumvallation. A siege, therefore, was absolutely prohibited, even if it had not been known, as seems to have been the case, that strong reinforcements were rapidly approaching. It may be alleged, that the place might have been carried by storm, but, it is presumed, no such idea prevailed, as it was not attempted; yet, if the attempt had been made and had succeeded, the strength of the American corps must necessarily have been sensibly impaired in the operation, and soon after would have been besieged by the dominant force of the enemy and reduced, as the possession of Niagara, and the command of the river, would have cut off the garrison, from all intercourse with its resources in the adjacent state.

But the proposition of Ripley to attack Rial, appears to be sustained by military principle and policy; and it was certainly justified, by General Brown's avowals to the secretary of war, and to Commodore Chauncey, of his "*capacity to break down all opposition, to meet the enemy in the field, and to march in any direction over their country;*" but retracting all reliance on the *corruscations* which illuminate the General's correspondence, reference to the comparative strength of the adverse corps, will determine the superiority. The estimate of General Rial's regular force on the 14th, made it from 1000 to 1500; I will take the last number, which after his loss at Chippawa, and detaching the 8th regiment, will be a liberal allowance; and will add to it 800 militia and Indians; the force of General Brown on the same day was estimated at 2700 regulars and 1000 volunteers, militia and Indians; but I will take the first number at 2500 and the last at 800, with which reduction the American scale would still preponderate one thousand; with such a superior force of troops flushed with victory, the disheartened enemy could not have coped, and if attacked must have been beaten, and captured, or destroyed; Ripley's proposition, therefore was recommended by the soundest considerations of policy and expediency, inasmuch as by overthrowing Rial,

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an engagement out of his works;"* to be enabled to form an adequate conception of the excessive folly and vanity of this ebullition, the reader must cast his eyes over the map of Niagara;† he will there perceive that the heights, which General Brown *chivalrously* abandoned to the enemy, are elevated 345 feet above the plain, into which he descended with his army; that their acclivity forms an angle of at least fifty degrees with the horizon, and that this mountain, is extended many miles to the north-westward; the ascent of such a steep, is fatiguing to an unincumbered individual, but to a soldier in the ranks, with sixty pounds on his back and shoulders, the weight of his arms, accoutrements, ammunition, provision, knapsack, blanket and canteen, it must be laborious and difficult, without opposition, but when seasonably opposed by a resolute enemy of half numbers, it is impracticable; here then General Brown and his co-adjutor Scott, for they must not be separated, if confidence could be placed in their professions, offered a sacrifice of the army they commanded to General Rial, which that officer declined to accept; such are the sudden transitions, from extreme confidence to extreme caution, to which all military corps, and indeed the human mind is liable. At Street's creek General Rial despised his enemy, but the effects of that day, had impaired his confidence in his own force, and taught him to respect the prowess of his adversary; he therefore determined to wait for the reinforcements which were at hand. Yet, as rash and improvident as General Brown may be, it would be uncandid to ascribe to him the degree of ignorance, necessary to establish the sincerity of the assurances, exhibited in this letter. It has been seen, that on the 14th, although carried in council by a plurality of

* It is proper to observe, that the letter as printed in Niles's Register, is dated the 22d, but I have been informed, and it has been published without contradiction, by the authority of an officer of rank, that the retrograde movement from Fort George, took place on the 23d July; if the statement be erroneous it can be corrected.

† See Atlas, No. XV.


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which, by the bye, is somewhat incredible, for, he says, in falling back to Chippawa, he had "*determined to disencumber himself of baggage, and march directly for Burlington Heights,*" with what view I cannot conceive, the place being a contracted but lofty peninsula, at the head of Lake Ontario, the isthmus of which was too strongly fortified to be carried by a *coup de main;* but, if it could have been taken by assault, as it is a small military post, serving as a mere entrepot, it would have been no acquisition to the United States, and of little injury to the enemy, because it could not have been held; but having rejected the proposition, made at Queenstown and carried in council, to attack General Rial in his camp at 12 miles distance, it seems highly improbable, General Brown should have determined, after the lapse of ten days, when his force had been diminished by disease and the defection of the Indians, to fall back seven miles and then advance on Rial and break him down, in order to get at Burlington Heights, twenty-eight miles in rear of the British general.

Those heights described, with reflections on a letter from General Brown to the secretary of war.

These obscurities and contradictions may perhaps be hereafter elucidated by the pen of President Madison, who may be usefully employed in his retirement, in writing commentaries on his own war; in the mean time I shall pursue my narrative. On the 24th July General Brown re-crossed the Chippawa, and encamped with his right on the bank of that river, and his left nearly at right angles on the strait, giving the junior corps the post of honour, the first brigade on the left, and the second on the right. General Rial followed* on his heels, and encamped the same evening at Lundy's Lane, about 4700 yards in front of General Brown's position. It is worthy of remark, that General Brown on the 25th July, after his return to Chippawa, wrote the secretary of war,† advising of his "*change of position,*" on the pretence of the failure of Commodore Chauncey to co-operate with him; in which letter he ob-

General Brown retreats to Chippawa, and is followed by General Rial to Lundy's Lane, July 24th.

* See General Drummond's letter, July 27th, 1814.—Annual Register, page 203.

† See Niles's Register, page 411.


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ments, and, joining General Rial, would have fallen on Brown's rear, and captured or destroyed his army. To the Commodore's illness then, and the disappointment which the General pretends,* may be ascribed his safety.

Reflections preliminary to the examination of the affair of Lundy's Lane.

I now approach a transaction which furnishes a most extraordinary instance of the ascendant, which the eclat of arms may acquire over human reason; even over the minds of a republican people who profess peace, and whose true policy consists in preserving tranquillity with all the world.

I speak not of achievements by which cities have been saved and states protected; of great and sanguinary battles fought, wherein the life of the soldier, has been bartered for the safety of the empire; of Thermopylæ or New Orleans; but of scenes of senseless carnage, wherein much was staked against nothing, and the country was exposed

* It always has been and ever shall be my pride, to vindicate the conduct of honourable men, and therefore I offer the following statement to my readers. Justly incensed by General Brown's disingenuity, to use no harsher term, Commodore Chauncey on the General's arrival at Sackett's Harbour, in the autumn of 1814, declined all intercourse with him. The General made overtures for an explanation which the Commodore at first rejected, but on the intercession of an officer whom he respected, he consented to speak to General Brown, if he would answer, satisfactorily, certain questions to be propounded to him by the Commodore, which being assented to, the following were offered to the General in writing.

"1st.—Did Commodore Chauncey ever directly or indirectly, by word or by writing, give you cause to expect that he would co-operate with you at the head of Lake Ontario?

"*Answer by General Brown*, "*Never.*"

"2d.—Has not Commodore Chauncey, on all occasions which have come within your knowledge, manifested a disposition, promptly and zealously to co-operate with the army, for the promotion of the public service?

"*Answer by General Brown*, "*Always.*"

I state these facts from memory, as I received them from the Commodore and the officer who mediated, and believe them to be substantially correct. I think there was a third interrogatory, but cannot recollect it. The paper was signed by General Brown and delivered to the Commodore, who afterwards met the General as an acquaintance, but I understand without further explanation.

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to a dread misfortune,* without a prospect of correspondent advantages. I am sensible the public judgment has been beguiled by misrepresentations, which have received the sanction of the national executive, and been imposed on the representative body for interested purposes; and I am aware of the difficulty of removing prejudices once established, particularly when they are fostered by self love; but I address myself to the virtue, intelligence, and independence of the country, and, regardless of consequences, shall discharge the duty of a faithful citizen; happy if by the development of facts, I shall be able to dissipate the delusions which have been spread before them, to promote a system of political frauds and corruption.

Source of information on which the details of that affair are founded.

In the details which I shall give of the brave, bloody, and obstinate nocturnal *rencontre* of Lundy's Lane, I shall be guided by legal testimony, written narrative and oral information, in which I place confidence; faithfully recording facts and incidents as they occurred and have been reported to me.

Reference to diagrams.

The map of the strait of Niagara,† which accompanies these memoirs, is presumed to be correct. The Diagrams (Nos. XII, XIII, XIV, and *a* XIV,) designed to illus-

* If the division intrusted to the direction of General Brown had been lost, in the awful state of the public sentiment and the public treasury at the time, the calamity might have proved fatal to the government. It will not be denied by any one who reads these memoirs, that by crossing into Upper Canada, he committed the troops under his command to imminent hazard, and without the means to accomplish any solid advantage—wherefore then the risk? I appeal to the sober sense of the nation for an answer.—If the expedition had been necessary—if it had been judiciously planned and ably conducted, then let General Brown continue to command the army of the United States.—But, on the contrary, if this expedition was inexpedient—if the professed objects did not warrant the hazard—if the means provided were not adequate to the end proposed—if the expedition was made without any determinate plan, and the execution committed to chance—then, I say, President Madison has been guilty of a grievous public wrong, by committing the blood and treasure of the country to such incompetent and improvident hands.

† See Atlas, No. XV.

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trate the night scenes of Lundy's lane, and the previous position of Brigadier-general Scott, are founded on the reports of many officers who were on the field, and the distance of the British battery from General Scott's first position, which was 600 yards, is given from a measurement made by an intelligent engineer.

Position of the two armies.

By a reference to the map of the strait, the reader will be enabled to form a general idea of the relative positions of General Brown's camp at Chippawa (D) and that of the enemy's at Lundy's lane, (I) with the intermediate ground and the posts of the advanced guards of the respective armies at x and s. On the morning of the 25th of July, the guard x of the American camp was commanded by Captain Odell* of the 23d regiment, who

* *Report of Captain A. W. Odell of the 23d Infantry.*

"On the morning of the 25th July, 1814, the American army under Major-general Brown, being then encamped at Chippawa, Upper Canada, I was detailed and assigned to the command of a picket, which, agreeably to the directions I received, was posted on the lower side of Chippawa creek, near the bank of Niagara river, on the road leading from Chippawa to Queenstown heights, about a quarter of a mile from the encampment.

"Between eight and nine o'clock A. M. I discovered a part of the enemy on an eminence near the falls, a mile and an half or two miles in advance of the picket. The party was stationary, and continued so during the day; of this I gave immediate notice to the officer of the day. Between twelve and one o'clock, a few of the enemy's dragoons approached very near the picket, and were fired on by some men concealed in advance; and frequently in different directions small parties of the enemy were observable from the picket, of which the officer of the day was informed; who, when he visited the picket, observed, that the information he had received was communicated to the general, *who ridiculed the idea that the enemy were in force near the falls.*

"*Between five and six o'clock P. M.* General Scott, with his brigade, marched past the picket on the road to Queenstown. The parties of the enemy in view retired at his approach.

"Near the falls, and on the ground occupied by the enemy as heretofore mentioned, General Scott's advance were fired on, and a few minutes after, the action became general. *Captain Spencer, General Brown's aid, rode up and inquired,* "*where was the firing?*" and when informed returned to camp. Having received orders, I moved with the picket to join General Scott, and not far in my rear

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in the forenoon reported to the field officer of the day, Major Leavenworth, of the 9th infantry, that he had discovered the enemy on post in his front. The Major reconnoitred the position, with a spy glass, and plainly perceived many officers in British uniforms. These circumstances were immediately communicated* by him to General Brown, who treated the information with slight, observing, "*the enemy could not be in force, as he had thrown a large portion of his troops across the river from Queenstown to Lewistown, with the intention to visit Old Fort Schlosser, directly opposite to his (Brown's) camp, where he had been making a deposit of sick, ammunition, baggage and provisions; the report of such a movement had reached General Brown, and not having boats to transport his sick or stores to the west side of the river, or to throw over a detachment for their protection,*" he, it is presumed, for the first time, saw the desperation of his situation, and, as drowning men catch at straws, without further examination, "*he ordered the first brigade under General Scott, to march immediately for Queenstown, in the vain expectation that its appearance there would divert the enemy from his enterprise against Fort Schlosser,*"† which he took for granted, because the stroke would have affected him vitally.

Report of Colonel Leavenworth to General Brown, and his answer.

General Scott ordered to march for Queenstown.

We have little chance of penetrating General Brown's real circumstances or motives of conduct, on the memorable 25th of July, from his official letter written to the Secretary of War many days after, and of course calculated to veil or to give a colouring to the imbecility and improvidence of his measures; yet by combining ob-

was the second brigade under General Ripley. The movements during the remainder of the battle are detailed in Captain M'Donald's testimony, which, as far as my knowledge extends, is correct. General Ripley was singularly brave and active.

"A. W. ODELL, Captain 23d Infantry."

* See Appendix No. IX, Colonel Leavenworth's statement.

† See ibid.

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vious circumstances to the admissions of that letter, we may be enabled to form deductions the most reasonable and solid, if not minutely correct in all their parts. The letter I allude to excites suspicion on many accounts, and, among the number, from the circumstance of its being presented to the public without a date; for thus it is published in Niles's Register of September 1st, from which I make the following extracts:

General Brown's official letter, without date, referred to, and quoted.

"You are already apprised that the army had on the 25th ult. taken a position at Chippawa.* About noon of that day, Colonel Swift, who was posted at Lewistown, advised me by express, that the enemy appeared in considerable force in Queenstown and on its heights; that four of the enemy's fleet had arrived during the preceding night, and were then lying near Fort Niagara, and that a number of boats were in view moving up the strait; within a few minutes after this intelligence had been received, I was further informed by Captain Denman of the quarter-master's department, that the enemy was landing at Lewistown, *and that our baggage and stores at Schlosser, and on their way thither, were in danger of immediate capture.* It is proper here to mention that, having received advices as late as the 20th, that our fleet was then in port, and the commodore sick, we ceased to look for co-operation from that quarter, and determined to disencumber ourselves of baggage, and march directly for Burlington heights. *To mask this intention, and to draw from Schlosser a small supply of provisions,* I fell back upon Chippawa. *As this arrangement, under the increased force of the enemy, left much at hazard on our own side of the Niagara, and as it appeared by the before stated information, that the enemy was about to avail him-*

* The reader's particular attention is called to this letter, in which the General cautiously confines his motives for falling back to Chippawa, "*to other objects,*" but does not define what those objects were, nor could he, as the fate of his army was at that moment suspended by a hair, *i. e.* the enemy's taking possession of his baggage and stores at Schlosser.

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self of it, I conceived that the most effectual method of recalling him from this object, was to put myself in motion towards Queenstown. General Scott, with the first brigade, Towson's artillery, and all the dragoons and mounted men were accordingly put in march on the road leading thither, *with orders* to report if the enemy appeared, and to call for assistance if that was necessary.* On the general's arrival at the falls,† he learned that the enemy was in force directly in his front, a narrow piece of woods alone intercepting his view of them.

"Waiting only to give this information, he advanced upon them; by the time assistant Adjutant-general Jones had delivered his message, the action began, and before the remaining part of the division had crossed the Chippawa, it had become close and general between the *advance corps.*‡ Though General Ripley, with the second brigade, Major Hindman, with the corps of artillery, and General Porter, at the head of his command, had respectively pressed forward with ardour, it was not less than an hour before they were brought to *sustain*§ *General Scott,* during which time his command most *skilfully*‖ and gallantly maintained the conflict. *Upon my arrival,* I found that the General had passed the wood and engaged the enemy at Queenstown road, and on the ground to the left of it, with the 9th, 11th, and 22d regiments, and

* This is inconsistent with the plan of diversion, or the information of General Miller and Colonel Leavenworth, who both say the order was peremptory to march to Queenstown.

† Barely two miles from General Brown's camp.

‡ That is *at* 600 *yards distance, between General Scott, with* 4 *or* 500 *American troops,* who had been ordered to Queenstown, *and a British division of* 2500 *men with seven pieces of artillery.* General Brown, it seems, can convert the first brigade detached from the main body on a separate command, into an *advanced corps,* with the same ease that he converted the *main body into a reserve* at Street's creek. No matter; the public will not understand it, and the President will give it currency.

§ They *covered* General Scott; they did not *sustain* him.

‖ Standing stock *still* under the fire of the enemy's battery, where the troops were slaughtered *without skill.* See the statement of Colonel Leavenworth, of the 9th regiment.

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Towson's artillery. The 25th had been thrown to the right to be governed by circumstances. Apprehending that these corps were much exhausted, and knowing that they had suffered severely, *I determined to interpose a new line** with the advancing troops, and thus disengage General Scott, and *hold his brigade in reserve.*"†

The reflections which naturally arise out of this exposition, are, that the American Generals‡ had no idea of the advance of the enemy, until the receipt of the intelligence from General Swift, at noon on the 25th; although General Drummond reached Queenstown that morning, and General Rial had marched on to Lundy's lane the evening before,§ within 4700 yards of General Brown's camp, with a division of 2500 infantry, a troop of dragoons, and seven pieces of artillery; yet General Brown informs the Secretary of War that he fell back from Queenstown the 24th, by way of *ruse*, and "*to draw from Schlosser a small quantity of provisions to enable him to march directly for Burlington heights,*" forty seven miles distant; at the moment too when General Drummond was advancing upon him, within a day's march, by the very route from those heights, with a heavy reinforcement. On hearing of the enemy's arrival at Queenstown, the general acknowledges that by his *own*

* By ordering General Ripley to form in the wood on the right of Scott in *i, i.* See testimony of Captain M'Donald, and Diagram, No. XIII.

† Here again *the advance* is converted into *the reserve.*

‡ I allude always to Brown and Scott, who acted in concert, the first being subordinate to the second, and of course no measure was adopted without his approbation. Ripley had, I understand, opposed the passage of the strait from the beginning, and was thought lightly of by the others.

§ Captain Odell declares that he discovered the advanced guard of the enemy, between eight and nine o'clock on the morning of the 25th, that is, as soon as he mounted his picket, which, if other proofs were wanting, would shew that the ground at Lundy's lane had been occupied the evening before, and the British guard probably then sent forward; as the hour was too early for the enemy to have broken up one camp, made a march, pitched another, reconnoitred his ground, and sent out his pickets on the morning of the same day.

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mismanagement he had "left much at hazard on our own side of the Niagara, and that it appeared the enemy was about to avail himself of it;" that is, that the enemy had, at last, determined to seize upon the advantages he had offered them, by crossing the strait into Upper Canada; of which, it would appear, our chief was only made sensible, by the report of General Swift, at a time when the destiny of the gallant corps under his orders, depended on a single movement of the enemy. Here we have the evidence of the general's own pen, to shew how irretrievably he had committed to the enemy, the division intrusted to his command; for if General Drummond, after General Brown's escape from Queenstown the 24th, had, the next day, pressed forward the detachment of 500 men with the Indians, which he sent up to Lewistown, from Niagara, under a Colonel Tucker, to old Fort Schlosser, only six miles further, they would have met with no obstacle in getting possession of the baggage and provisions of the American army; and thus cut off from supplies and resources, and pressed in rear by a superior force, they could not have effected a retreat to Detroit, and must have laid down their arms or been destroyed. It is evident when General Scott marched, that neither Brown nor himself knew any thing of the actual situation of the enemy, for Scott was to move *"towards Queenstown, and if the enemy appeared he was to report, and if necessary was to call for assistance."* Now the very provisions of this order, if to be credited, shew that when Scott marched with 700 men towards Queenstown, he knew not when, or where, or in what force, he should meet the enemy, or whether he should meet them at all.* Was there ever such a scene of blind ignorance and rashness exhibited in the conduct of an army? I appeal not only to military men, but to every intelligent, reflecting person! and to such officers has President Madison confided the safety of the country and the

* If they had crossed the strait as Brown expected, he would not have met them at all, and this no doubt was the calculation when he marched, or surely the second brigade would have been held in readiness to support him.

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lives of its citizens. With a single remark I shall dismiss this dateless official letter of General Brown, and pursue my narrative; whoever will take the pains to examine and compare it with the facts and circumstances herein detailed, will find it more abundant in *fictions* and *falsehoods* than any public document of equal length, extant in our language.

General Scott, according to concert, marched between five and six o'clock* in the afternoon, with the skeletons of the 9th, 11th, 22d, and 25th regiments, Towson's artillery, a troop of United States and a party of volunteer dragoons; but it does not appear that any precautions were taken to ascertain the position or force of the enemy, or to support this movement, nor was the second brigade even advised of it.† Yet this devoted handful of choice spirits, panting for glory, marched off with light hearts; alas! how many of them were destined, *without benefit to themselves or their country*,‡ never to witness another rising sun! I have heard that, while the troops were falling in, Major M'Neil made some observations to General Scott, touching the smallness of his force, and the hazard to which it would be exposed, in marching against an enemy whose *strength and position were unknown*, on which the general turned to his portable library, and pulled out a *volume*, wherein he *read to the Major an account of a certain General*, who, at a *certain time* and *place*, had, with a thousand men, beaten fourfold numbers. It is further reported that the late Major Wood, the engineer, by repute an intuitive soldier, accompanied General Scott in this movement, and riding in *front of* the column, arrived alone at Mrs. Wilson's, *precisely* two miles from Chippawa bridge. It was at *this* house the advanced guard of the enemy had been posted in the

* See narrative of Captain Odell.

† See Captain M'Donald's testimony.

‡ These brave men had acquired honour at Street's Creek, but here they were cut to pieces by a battery at 600 yards distance, whilst throwing away an ineffectual fire, by which it is believed by men on the field, not thirty of the enemy were killed or wounded.

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forenoon, and Major Wood was there informed that General Rial and his suite had just left the house, that the British army, in great force, were encamped behind a wood a few hundred yards to the northward, and that they were determined to attack the American army the next day. Major Wood returned with this information to General Scott, then under march, who transmitted it to General Brown, and as if determined to lead his handful of men headlong to destruction, *he quickened his pace;* and, for what reason needs explanation, when marching in open ground, he threw off the whole 9th regiment into a left flank guard, *c, c, c,* and advanced *in quick time** upon the enemy, who retired before him. In this order he moved forward to the fork of the road at the margin of the wood,† where he received a shot from the enemy, and halted. He then recalled the 9th regiment into the column, detached Major Jesup with the 25th regiment to his right in *d, d,* to "*seek and attack the enemy's left,*"‡ *of course without knowing their strength or position.*

Intelligence received by Major Wood, and communicated to General Scott.

Movement of General Scott, and his disposition of his force.

At this critical stage of the operation, accounts become obscure and irreconcileable; I will endeavour to do justice to the adverse statements; I collect from Colonel Leavenworth, "that General Scott, having detached the 25th regiment, inverted the order of his march,§ and proceeded with the 22d, 11th, and 9th regiments; passing his advanced

* As General Stark was crossing Charlestown neck, the 17th of June 1775, to the defence of Breed's Hill, at the head of his regiment, the troops were galled by a very brisk cross fire from the floating batteries of the enemy, in Charles and Mystic Rivers; Captain (now General) Dearborn, who was about to flesh his maiden sword, observing the effect of the enemy's shot, suggested to Stark, who was moving with a very deliberate pace, that by quickening his march he would the sooner relieve the column from the fire of the enemy. Stark, with a look peculiar to himself, turned his eyes upon Dearborn, and remarked, "*Dearborn, don't you know, that one fresh man in action is worth two fatigued ones?*" This was an impressive lesson which General Scott had not received, notwithstanding the *extent* of his *experience*, and his *vast range* in "PARTIZAN WAR."

† See Atlas, No. XII.

‡ See Narrative of Colonel Leavenworth.

§ See narrative of Colonel Leavenworth.

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General Scott discovers the enemy in order of battle, and is attacked before he can form.

guard, which had been halted, he traversed the wood about two hundred and forty yards deep, and discovered the enemy on a height in his front, formed in battalia, with a heavy battery on their left; he then wheeled to his left into a smooth field on the west of the road. It was now about half after five o'clock P. M. when the enemy opened his battery of *nine pieces*, two of them twenty-four pounders, within canister distance, and commenced a brisk fire from a heavy line of infantry, posted to the right and obliquely in front of their battery. After advancing into the field so far as to have the rear of the *battalion or regiment** in advance clear of the woods, General Scott ordered "FORM LINE TO THE FRONT." The right of the column being in front, this order was immediately executed by the echellon movement of companies to the left. The 22d and 11th regiments moved in column until gaining their respective distances formed line in the same manner. At about the same time, the company of artillery under Captain Towson, moved up and formed on the right of the 9th regiment, and, by frequent and incessant discharges, highly animated the spirits of the troops. *Under this formation the action continued nearly an hour*, when it was reported that the 11th regiment, being out of ammunition, had retired from the field, and for the same cause the 22d regiment soon after followed." The preceding details are taken in substance from a printed narrative of Lieutenant-colonel Leavenworth, who commanded the 9th regiment on the sanguinary occasion, in which he appears to have taken an active and determined part; and it is *on this* information specifically, that I have formed General Scott's line, and given the enemy his position in the Diagram No. XII.; but how shall we reconcile the very opposite accounts, which have been rendered on oath before a tribunal of justice? I will answer from what I have witnessed, that in warm military combats, an officer at the head of a platoon or battalion, who does his duty, can see very little beyond his immediate command, and that

* That is, 150 rank and file, or one company and an half.

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different men see the same objects with different optics. In the present instance, the gentlemen quoted are, I understand, all of irreproachable character and confessed honour. Colonel M'Neil, who commanded the 11th regiment on this bloody arena of Lundy's lane, being called as a witness on the trial of Captain Blake, of the artillery, for imputed misconduct in that affair, when a lieutenant in the 11th infantry, declares, "*that on the 25th of July General Scott's brigade was ordered out to drive back the enemy* AS HE SUPPOSED; *he commanded the 11th regiment, marched, and soon after passed the falls of Niagara, near which they received a shot from the enemy, about which time General Scott was making a disposition of his brigade; we were at this time passing a defile, very near where we received the shot; the 22d regiment, which was on my front, kept nearly a direct course, while the 9th and 11th wheeled on the left, nearly forming a right angle with the 22d regiment; when the 11th was in the act of wheeling, the 22d broke, and ran athwart the 11th, and broke several platoons considerably to pieces; I was a little in front where the breach took place; I observed it, and wheeled my horse, in order to collect the men if possible, but the bushes being so near, they gained them, which made it impracticable for me to perform that duty; in addition to which my regiment was under a very heavy fire, and I thought my presence necessary with it. I met Lieutenant Blake, who told me his platoon had broke and fled from him in spite of all he could do. I ordered him to pursue, collect, and bring them back. The 11th regiment was not engaged when Lieutenant Blake's platoon broke. I was wounded in the commencement of the action and retired from the field; it was then dark; General Ripley's brigade had not then got up.*" Captain Crawford on the same trial deposes, "*I was adjutant of the 11th regiment; after the firing of small arms had ceased, the enemy's cannon continued to fire, and killed and wounded many of our men. The brigade was counted off into eight platoons, and the officers ordered to take platoons without being posted. The 11th regiment on the left of the brigade consisted of thirty men.*" Lieutenant Sawyer on the same

Testimony of Colonel M'Neil.

Captain Crawford's testimony.

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trial says, "*Captain Blake's detachment was ordered by General Scott to the right of the brigade, when it commenced a fire upon the enemy; the fire was continued until a great proportion of the detachment were killed or wounded.*"*

Lieutenant Sawyer's testimony.

Lieutenant Thompson swears, "*that at the battle of Bridgewater, at the time our brigade was wheeled into line, our platoons on the left of the 11th regiment, four or five of them, or three or four for certain, broke and fell back into the rear, into a piece of wood; that at the time the brigade was formed anew, there was a great deal of confusion, there was some difficulty in obtaining commands; there were two commissioned officers file closers in the platoon to which I belonged; the officers were not assigned to their posts, but took them as they could find them.*"

Lieut. Thompson's testimony.

Sergeant Blake, of the 6th, formerly of the late 11th regiment, called as a witness on the same trial, swears that "*in the battle of Bridgewater, the 11th regiment broke and retired through the woods. I got a few men collected. When the Prisoner came through the woods and joined me, he had collected more men; we then marched into the road; we stopped there a short time; we then marched into a field the other side of the road, and stopped there a short time, it is impossible for me to tell how long; we were on the move to return back into the road, when an officer rode up and ordered us to the field of action; we then proceeded and formed on the right of the first brigade; we opened a fire upon the enemy; the remainder of the brigade were out of cartridges; I should judge we were engaged twenty-five or thirty minutes. The brigade was then formed into a battalion after the firing had ceased, and counted off into platoons; we remained there until after the second brigade passed by; we then wheeled up into open column, and marched some distance, I cannot tell how far, and formed a line by a fence; we remained there some time, and received cartridges, wheeled*

Sergeant Blake's testimony.

* A single platoon keeping up a fire against seven pieces of artillery in the dark, at 600 yards distance, until the greater part of the men are killed or wounded, is not the least of those great achievements for which President Madison has exalted General Scott.

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again into open column, and marched on to the hill." Corporal Zabine Hubbard, formerly a corporal in the late 11th regiment of infantry, called as a witness on the same trial, swears that "*he was corporal of the colour guard, on the 25th of July, 1814; we met the English army at a place that was then called Bridgewater; we were thrown into confusion by their heavy fire, and broken; after being thrown into confusion, I heard Colonel, then Major M'Neil, order the Prisoner to the rear to collect absconders; this was before we had given any fire to the enemy; we afterwards formed and fought, I should say, about three quarters of an hour; I was then wounded, and returned to camp. Immediately after I left the line, about thirty-five rods in the rear, I saw the Prisoner marching fifty men, or thereabouts.*"

Corporal Hubbard's testimony.

It appears from this testimony that the skeletons of regiments belonging to the first brigade, led to the field by Brigadier-general Scott, were never formed in line, of course the Diagram founded on Colonel Leavenworth's report is erroneous; and when we take into consideration, that the 25th regiment had been detached in quest of the enemy, that the 9th marched 150 men only from the camp, and that a large portion of the 22d and the 11th, broke and retreated before they had engaged the enemy, I think it a fair presumption, that Brigadier-general Scott did not at any period during the affair at Lundy's lane, command more than 400 rank and file; and that when the fragments of the three regiments were incorporated, and told off into eight platoons, they did not exceed 120 file, or 240 men.*

Diagram No. XII. incorrect.

General Scott's brigade breaks before it was formed.

Its force.

I have taken much pains to ascertain with precision, at what point of time this action commenced, on which subject there is also a diversity of opinions. Colonel Leavenworth thinks the enemy's battery was opened about half past five o'clock. Captain Odell, who commanded the picket on the road to Queenstown, two miles in

Respecting the time at which the action commenced.

* A Major's diminutive command, about which, and the Brigadier, more noise and bragging has been made than about the Duke of Cumberland's column at Fontenoy, or the immortalised Dessaix at Marengo.

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rear of Scott's position, says, that the first brigade passed him between five and six o'clock. Captain M'Donald, on his oath, declares it was about *half an hour before sunset* when the firing commenced. Colonel M'Neil declares on his oath, that he was wounded *in the commencement of the action, and retired from the field, and it appears it was then dark.* Major Riddle, the brave partizan, who, with 100 men, had been sent out in the forenoon by General Brown to reconnoitre the enemy, and who assured him they were not in force, and desired him to take off the picket at Mrs. Wilson's, having proceeded to (B), and discovered there was a body of the enemy on his left, he retired, but had not got back before General Scott marched; he says he reached the bridge of Chippawa just as he heard the first gun, and *it was at that time about sunset;* but a very correct young gentleman, Lieutenant Shaw of the 1st regiment, is more circumstantial. "*The regiment,*" says this promising young officer, "*landed from the opposite side of the strait, half a mile above Chippawa, 150 strong. The retreat was beating in camp when the first gun was fired, and the regiment marched without music in consequence of the lateness of the evening. They reached the camp at Chippawa after the second brigade had marched, got to the field of battle in the dark when the 21st regiment was engaged, and, advancing through a heavy fire, fell in on the left of that regiment and the right of the volunteers. The 1st regiment once fell back fifty yards by order, but never retreated or broke;* he says "*it was so dark that two or three of the British officers mistook the regiment, marched up, and were made prisoners.*" Brevet Major Marston, then of the 21st regiment, declares, that "*the fire commenced about sunset, while the troops were paraded for roll-call.*"

From all these facts and circumstances, it may be fairly inferred that the action was commenced about sunset, and I will endeavour with the assistance of Diagram No. XII,* to place before the reader the opening scenes of this murderous nocturnal rencontre. Neither the hazardous *spe-*

* See Atlas.

Reflections on the motives of General Scott's proposed march to Queenstown.

culations of General Brown, nor the *blind temerity* of General Scott, will warrant the suspicion that either of them would seek a *traffic* in human life, unless they believed the *adventure* promised a favourable result; for this reason, as well as the proposed enterprise against Burlington heights, it inevitably follows, that these chiefs must have been so ill informed of the movements of the enemy, as not to be apprised of the reinforcements which had reached General Rial, or of the near approach of that officer to their camp; and that in this state of ignorance, and under the impression that Rial, who knew the country, was about to take the advantage offered to him at Schlosser, which could have been effected without difficulty, the associate chiefs were reduced to the frightful dilemma, of awaiting the menaced ruin in their camp, or of throwing Scott back upon Queenstown; with the faint hope that his approach to that place might recal Rial, if he was really passing the river, or in the more precarious expectation, that should he find Rial's corps divided, he might cut up his rear. General Brown expressed his disbelief that the enemy was in force near him, both to Colonel Leavenworth and to Major Riddle, although they had made abundant demonstrations to warrant a different conclusion. General Scott's orders which directed him to Queenstown, the very late hour of his march, the entire want of precaution before he marched, and the total neglect of preparation to support him afterwards; the mystery and reserve which appears to have attended the movement of the brigade, and the surprise* and hurry which ensued the commencement of the action, all tend to prove that General Brown and his second were the dupes of their inexperience, their confidence and want of caution. But for the delusion General Scott would hardly have pressed through the wood, beyond Mrs. Wilson's, to put himself, with 700 men, within the grasp of the British General, who, it is asserted and believed, commanded 2500 men, and by a decisive move-

* Captain Odell, who commanded the advanced guard, says, when the firing commenced, Captain Spencer, General Brown's aid-de-camp, rode up and asked, "*where was the firing?*"

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ment at the beginning of the action, could have crushed Scott in five minutes as well as five hours. Let the eye be carried to the Diagram No. XII.,* and what a spectacle is presented to a military man. The enemy on a strong position arrayed in battalia *e, e, e,*† with a heavy battery of seven pieces posted on an eminence at *f*, adjacent to the church *g*, and just in front of Lundy's lane, *h, h.* On making the discovery of the enemy's force and position, General Scott's situation *ought to have been a painful one.* To have fallen back immediately, under cover of the wood in his rear, and on his right, which would have been the resort of any officer of prompt resource and true VALOUR,‡ might have exposed too plainly the rashness and folly which had so absolutely committed the troops he commanded; and to have advanced on the enemy would have been a wilful and inhuman sacrifice of them. With shame in his rear and destruction in his front; without military experience, or presence of mind to extricate him from the dilemma into which he had plunged himself, he halted at the point of the field, the most remote from the enemy's battery, and paralysed not by personal fear, but a state of frenzied impotence, he suffered the gallant 9th and the men of the 11th and 22d regiments, who were brought into action, to remain fixed to the spot; and thus circumstanced the reader will find

Position of the British corps.

General Scott's situation and duty.

His position.

* See Atlas.

† Let it be remembered that this position rests on the narrative of Colonel Leavenworth.

‡ I do not deny to General Scott the attribute of animal courage, but I contend that his conduct at Lundy's lane was not directed by true valour, which is thus beautifully described by the Poet:—

"What is true valour?
It is the greatest virtue, and the safety
Of all mankind; the object of it's danger
A certain mean 'twixt Fear and Confidence;
No inconsid'rate rashness, or vain appetite
Of false encount'ring formidable things,
But a true science of distinguishing
What's good or evil. It springs out of reason,
And tends to perfect honesty, *the scope*
Is always honour, and the public good:
It is no valour for a private cause."

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him, in *a*, *a*, his right covered by Towson's artillery, and his rear resting on the wood, through which he had just passed.

Principles of service contrasted with the conduct of empty pretenders.

It will not be denied, that the General who, with the means in his power, does not know how to guard himself against defeat, is as unfit to command an army, as he who will see no difficulty, and consults his courage only. If General Brown had possessed more experience and knowledge of his profession, and General Scott less confidence and temerity, the lives of valiant men and faithful citizens, would not have been rashly thrown away. If the former had waited the return of the reconnoitring party, sent out by him under Lieutenant Riddle, he would have received information of the proximity of the enemy, which *ought* to have prevented the detachment of the latter to make a diversion at Queenstown; or if General Scott, after receiving information that the enemy were in force within half a mile of him, had thought more of the public service, and less of personal distinction; if he had possessed the circumspection and caution implied by his rank, he would have halted, reported to his commander, and waited the result; and, in the mean time, he would have reconnoitred and ascertained the enemy's numbers and position. Such would have been the conduct of an officer *of the least judgment and discretion.* It was warranted by principle and enjoined by duty, since it is apparent he was detached to make *a diversion*, and not to bring *on an action with a superior force*, under every circumstance of disadvantage; besides, the precaution might have saved much, and could have cost nothing; for if the enemy had been found in dominant force, he could have deliberated on the expediency of making an attack or not, and in case of an affirmative conclusion, he could then have determined on the most advantageous plan of conducting it. On the contrary, if the enemy had not been in force, they would have vanished before his parties of observation, and he could then have pursued his march for Queenstown without obstruction.

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General Scott's conduct and ignorance exposed.

Let us see what was the conduct of General Scott? Instead of pursuing this salutary judicious course, he transmits a hasty report to his commander, advances upon the enemy "*in quick time,*" as if to prevent their escape, *inverts* the order of march, throws his vanguard into his rear,* and leads his puny force into so injudicious, exposed, and defenceless a position, that the brave men who had conquered by his side at Street's creek, could not withstand the destructive fire poured down upon them by the enemy's battery from the heights of Lundy's lane, but broke and fell back in disorder before they were formed or had fired a shot.† But having taken the position he lacked presence of mind to change it, whilst the enemy deliberately desolated his ranks, and strewed the field with killed and wounded.

Operations of General Scott by the statement of Colonel Leavenworth.

In the order in which the reader found General Scott's command, under the battery of Lundy's lane, in Diagram No. XII., "*it continued nearly one hour, during which period Colonel M'Neil being wounded, the 11th regiment retired from the field, and Captain Bliss, Lieutenants Crawford and Sawyer, and other officers of that corps, offered their services to Colonel Leavenworth‡ of the 9th regiment. About the same period, it was discovered that the elevated position of the enemy's battery protected it against that of Captain Towson, which had ceased to fire, and the field appears to have been contended for by the enemy against the 9th regiment alone, and the stragglers who had joined it; in this eventful moment, General Scott sent his aid-de-camp, Captain Worth, with orders to Colonel Leavenworth to advance upon the enemy, with a view to charge them; he of course ceased firing, and advanced with supported arms, until this order was countermanded.*" The preceding is substantially the statement of Colonel Leavenworth, in his narrative before referred to, and is conclusive as to the shattered condition of the detachment of General Scott, then probably reduced to less than 300 men; for

* See Testimony of Colonel M'Neil.

† See ibid.

‡ See Appendix, No. IX.

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it must always be remembered, that the 9th regiment marched with 150 men only; but this information of Colonel Leavenworth, whilst it speaks emphatically for the courage of his men and officers, discloses an instance of General Scott's blind temerity, which would hardly be credited from less respectable authority, inasmuch as he ordered the 9th regiment, with the stragglers who had joined it, say in the whole 300 men, to charge the British line estimated at 2500.

Action continued and rule for retreating fulfilled.

During this period of more than an hour, while General Scott kept his station in *a*, *a*, and, at 600 yards distance, maintained the unequal combat with his musketry, opposed to the grape and canister of the enemy's twenty-four pounders; the British General, it would appear, made light detachments from his centre and right through the wood, to the edge of the field on the left of General Scott, in *i*, *i*, which were noticed by Colonel Leavenworth, and attracted his fire; but from a comparison of circumstances, it must have been dark when the charge was ordered, and Colonel Leavenworth soon after reported to General Scott, by Captain Harris of the dragoons, whose voluntary proffer of his services, without command, does honour to his zeal and gallantry, that "*the rule for retreating was fulfilled*,* but the general ordered him to keep his ground, and announced the approach of General Brown with Ripley's brigade and Porter's volunteers; and these corps soon after arrived, the enemy having some time before ceased the fire of small arms, and it is presumed fell back† to cover their battery.

Reflections on the conduct of General Rial and General Scott.

Here let us pause and make a few brief reflections. Why the British General did not profit of the advantage

* As I had never heard of such a *rule*, I have sought information, and understood that General Scott has laid it down as a principle that a corps *may* retire, *when every third or fourth man is killed or wounded.* This military aphorism has also been attributed to General Moreau: but I conceive if that great Captain ever did consent to it, it must have been in a qualified sense.

† See Diagram, No. XIII. *c*, *c*, *c*.

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General Scott offered him, particularly when he issued from the wood, and his corps was observed to break and retire in disorder before it was formed, is to me utterly inexplicable; the temptation seemed too strong to be resisted; for if he had even suspected a stratagem, he could have pressed forward a thousand men, to feel the American detachment, without committing himself. Equally surprising it is, that General Scott should have remained stationary for more than an hour, on a spot from whence he could give the enemy little annoyance, but where, it is in proof, his detachment was cut to pieces by their canister and grape-shot; and it is the opinion of officers who were on the field, that he had not injured thirty of the enemy at the time the second brigade came to his succour, his artillery being found inefficient from their position, and his musketry too remote to produce any effect. Between these chiefs it would be difficult to decide who blundered deepest, he who declined the *proffered boon*, or he who made *the wanton sacrifice*.

Testimony of Captain M'Donald and a glance at a court of inquiry.

Preliminary to the introduction of the troops who saved General Scott from extinction, and asserted the character of the American arms, I think proper to refer the reader to the luminous testimony of Captain M'Donald,* rendered before a court of inquiry, instituted at Troy, in the state of New York, to examine into the conduct of General Ripley, *which was afterwards stifled by the executive*,† to prevent expositions more ample, more minute, and more disgraceful, than those which now occupy my pen.

This testimony examined and applied.

From the details of this testimony of an officer, whose candour and veracity will not be questioned by his com-

* See Appendix, No. X.

† It is notorious that the favourite Scott, about this period, was plying between Baltimore and the metropolis to intrigue with and give lessons to the Secretary of War at one place, and at the other to exhibit a new model for military commanders. I have been informed that this court of inquiry was dissolved by the order or at the desire of General Scott, and I understand that the acting Secretary of War assured General Ripley it was done in his absence.

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rades in arms, it appears that the movement of General Scott, on the 25th July, was so little understood in the camp of General Brown, "*that at first it was taken to be for the purpose of parade and drill; that no information had been received of the enemy to his knowledge from the 16th to the 25th of July; that when General Scott moved out in the afternoon, no idea was entertained that there would be an action, nor had they any knowledge of the vicinity of the enemy; that the first information they had was from the firing; it was then about half an hour before sunset;* the second brigade was immediately formed, and soon after received orders from the Aid-de-camp of General Brown, to advance and reinforce General Scott. General Ripley immediately marched, and half a mile in rear of the action, it being near dusk, the witness was despatched to General Brown for orders, and met his aid-de-camp, Captain Spencer, proceeding with orders to General Ripley from General Brown, to form his brigade in *the skirt of the wood*, in *i*, *i*,* on the right of General Scott. The brigade accordingly continued to advance, and was in the act of forming the line, when General Ripley observed to Colonel Miller and other commanders, that to form a line in that place could be of no consequence, as they could not advance in line through the woods, and they were not within striking distance of the enemy. *He added that he would take upon himself the responsibility of moving further on towards the enemy before he formed,* and sent the witness to apprise General Brown of his purpose, but not finding him, he immediately joined General Ripley."

General Ripley advances on his own responsibility and contrary to his orders.

"Whilst advancing through the wood, the fire of the enemy's battery was very brisk, and his shot and shells fell thickly about the second brigade under march, but appeared to be directed more particularly towards General Scott's detachment, which the second was then about to pass. Under the impression that General Scott was suffering severely from this continued destructive fire,

* See Diagram, No. XIII.

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Determines to carry the enemy's battery, for which service he orders Colonel Miller, with the 21st regiment.

General Ripley determined to attempt to carry the battery, and ordered Colonel Miller with the 21st regiment to execute that service, which this dauntless officer cheerfully undertook." The public opinion seems to have been unsettled, respecting the merits of this distinguished stroke of the war, for while the execution is universally conceded to Colonel Miller, general Brown has made an equivocal pretension to the discernment which suggested it, with what justice let the following summary of facts declare. Captain M'Donald says, that about the time of passing General Scott, Ripley "remarked to the witness and Colonel Miller, that he would detach the 21st regiment under the latter to carry the enemy's artillery, adding that unless this was done, they would destroy our whole force, or compel us to fall back; about the time the 21st was preparing to move as directed, the witness met General Brown, who inquired for General Ripley, and asked *what dispositions he had made?* The witness informed him; he approved of it, and appeared quite elated with the intelligence, and accompanied him to General Ripley; some conversation took place between them, and in a very few minutes both battalions were in motion."

Colonel Miller has made the following written declaration, published at the office of the Boston Patriot in 1815: "*That the enemy's artillery was advantageously posted on a height commanding the plain; the destruction which it dealt through our ranks, suggested the imperious necessity of carrying the height; this General Ripley decided to be done with his own brigade; the 21st regiment advanced and charged the battery in front; he led the 23d upon their flank; both these regiments present were less than 700 men. The movement was performed in the most heroic manner by both regiments, and in a few minutes we found ourselves in possession of the whole park, consisting of seven pieces, and the enemy was routed in every direction.*"* Thus speaks the unaffected, unambitious patriot soldier and virtuous citizen, and thus the fictions and

* See Appendix, No. XI.

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like the first brigade, would have been cut to pieces, without offending the enemy. The facts are before the reader, and will enable him to decide on the comparative merits of these Generals.

Movement of the second brigade.

Ripley having concerted his plan with Colonel Miller, the second brigade advanced in the dark. The battery of the enemy was, from its explosions, known to be on an eminence, but the second brigade could have no knowledge of the number of its guns, or the force by which it was supported. It was a hardy enterprise, imperiously enjoined by the desperate circumstances into which General Scott had drawn the troops. Colonel Miller, with the 21st, wheeled into a lane on the left of the road, and displayed in *h*,* with an orchard *p*, on his right. Ripley, with the 23d regiment, under the immediate command of the gallant unfortunate Major M'Farland, advanced in column on the main road; he was unexpectedly fired on, directly in front, and the troops fell back fifty or sixty yards, but the disorder was recovered, and the regiment re-formed in five minutes, and advancing to Lundy's lane *e*, *e*, wheeled to the left, and displayed in *d*. In the mean time, the intrepid, sagacious Miller, moved silently against the battery, and reached the fence of the graveyard *k*, immediately in front of, and under the guns, whose fire was pointed at the position of General Scott, the British line being a few rods in rear, in *c*, *c*, *c*. Directed by the fire of the enemy, Colonel Miller poured in upon them a destructive volley, prostrated the fence, and rushing upon the battery, carried it without a struggle, the artillerists necessarily deserting their guns. The 21st was then advanced to Lundy's lane, and formed in *m*. The surprise attending this assault must have produced some embarrassment in the British line, which gave Colonel Miller time to respire. Soon, however, the gallant foe advanced to recover what they had lost, and then a nocturnal rencontre took place, which was continued, at intervals, for two hours, more close, obstinate, and bloody,

Colonel Miller carries the battery of the enemy,

* See Diagram, No. XIII.

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damned scoundrel it was who had given orders for the troops to cheer?" Some person answered it was the General; on which the Colonel observed, "*it served to expose our position to the enemy.*" Again the battery ceased, and shortly after, General Scott rode up and said, "*Good news, my boys, General Rial is taken, three cheers!*" and the enemy again opened their battery. A third pause ensued, and a heavy fire of small arms was observed directly in front, and word was brought that the battery of the enemy was taken, and General Scott ordered a third cheer. So far Major Riddle.

Information of Lieutenants Crawford, Sawyer, and Thompson.

It has been seen from the narratives of Colonel Leavenworth, and Lieutenants Crawford, Sawyer, and Thompson, that not long after the capture of the enemy's battery, General Scott consolidated the shattered remains of his corps into one battalion of eight platoons, which appears to have been so hastily organised, that the officers were not posted,* "*but were directed to find their places as well as they could.*" Previous to this, a party of fifty men, who had been collected from the fugitives of the 11th regiment, were brought up by Captain Blake, and placed on the right of the brigade, and, by order of General Scott, the rest of the troops having exhausted their ammunition, this party opened a fire in the dark, directed towards the enemy, which they kept up twenty-five or thirty minutes, during which time a great part of the men were killed or wounded by the enemy's battery. The officers having found places in the consolidated battalion, which I shall in the Diagrams designate the 9th regiment, it was wheeled into open co-

* The admirers of General Scott may call this an improvement in the formation for battle, and it is indeed admirable for its novelty; for surely it is the first instance recorded in military history, in which a battalion was marched against the enemy before the officers were posted. It furnishes an incontestible evidence of the General's impetuosity and levity, and proves that he was more intent on making a noise than performing solid service. If such conduct be unpardonable in day-light, what shall we say of it in the night, after the corps had been broken and mingled?

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before the enemy advanced to the second charge, General Porter had moved up with his volunteers, who, with Lieutenant Riddle's detachment, he formed *en potence* on the left of the line in *k*, *i*.

Ripley inquires of Brown whether the captured artillery should not be moved from the hill.

While Ripley was forming this line, Captain M'Donald deposes, that "*he was sent by that officer to ask General Brown, whether the captured artillery should not be moved off the field towards Chippawa;*" he met General Brown ascending the hill, and delivered his message, who replied, "*there were matters of more importance to attend to at that time, and he would see General Ripley himself.*" He appeared highly elated, and rode with him to General Ripley, but he did not hear the conversation which passed. After General Brown's interview with General Ripley, he left the hill, as he understood, in search of General Scott; but it appears from Colonel Leavenworth's narrative, did not find him, as Colonel Leavenworth, about the same time, was sent in quest of General Brown by General Scott, and found him, after Ripley's second combat, as has been said, in the orchard at *p*.*

Second charge of the enemy.

The Diagram No. XIV. will exhibit the several corps in line, as formed by General Ripley, when he received the second charge of the enemy, who, after the first repulse, fell back to *f*, *f*, *f*, but being re-formed, extended their line and advanced to *g*, *g*, *g*. This was a movement to test the intrepidity of the combatants; it presented

* Captain Thomas Biddle had preceded the second brigade, and was overtaken by the 21st regiment, near the lane into which Colonel Miller wheeled, when he displayed in *h*. Being apprised of the meditated attack, Captain Biddle advanced a small distance on the main road, and opened his battery in *o*, against that of the enemy, to amuse them until Colonel Miller made his assault. He then continued his march to the proximity of Lundy's lane, and formed in *o*, *o*, where he received a front fire from the enemy, probably the King's regiment and incorporated militia, stationed by General Drummond† on the left of the road, which he returned, and in that position he continued on his own discretion, covering the right of the American line, during the whole action, in the course of which he received two wounds.

† See Appendix, No. XII.

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calls for, his right inclining to Lundy's lane, and his left to the captured artillery; the darkness may well account for any inaccuracy of his narrative. General Ripley in the mean time threw forward the several corps under his command, and formed them in *alignement* with Towson's artillery and the 25th regiment, in *c, c.** The enemy, whose persevering courage could not be excelled, but by men who sprung from the same stock, being refreshed and reorganised, advanced to the charge a third time; and I must again take leave to give the reader Captain M'Donald's account, rendered on oath, of the contest in which he took an active part. "*After an interval of half an hour, or three quarters,*" says this officer, "*the enemy advanced in nearly the same manner,*" to *d, d, attacked precisely in the same point, but did not approach so near, before the firing commenced. The contest was more severe, and I think continued longer than the last. The same precautions were enjoined by General Ripley, with respect to the men's reserving their fire, and the reception of the enemy was equally warm. Some part of our right and left gave way, but our centre, composed of the 21st regiment, stood firm, with the exception of some platoons, which also fell back. The enemy were repulsed, and again retired,*" to *g, g.* During this conflict, as in the second, nothing is heard of General Brown, whose sacred duty it had become, when his whole force was closely engaged, to have taken the command in person, and directed its operations. A man of true military sentiment would have suffered martyrdom, sooner than thus yield up the point of glory and honour to a subordinate; yet the General was on the field and not then wounded. Apprised of this shameful direliction of duty, for which a tribunal of honourable men must have degraded him, the *executive sympathies*† were interposed to save the chief from

Third charge of the enemy.

Conduct of General Brown and the executive.

* See Diagram, No. *a* XIV.

† But why did not those sympathies operate in favour of the friendless soldier Dyson? who was sacrificed after the cowardice of Bladensburgh.

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the column himself, we passed through our line between the pieces of our artillery, and came in contact with the left of the enemy's line, a short distance past the centre, which immediately gave way; *owing, however, to the darkness of the night, our column became in some degree irregular; we passed the extreme left of General Porter's volunteers, and again formed our men in line.*" This detail is given in Colonel Leavenworth's language, and if admitted to be literally correct, what does it amount to? That General Scott perceiving the approaching storm, determined to signalise himself at the expense of his own life, or by the extinction of the handful of courageous men and officers he led. Pursuant to this purpose, he, in *a transport of bravery*, plunged headlong into the fire of the contending corps, near the American right, and being broken and disordered, he scrambled down between the adverse lines whilst closely engaged, and escaped, with those who survived, by the American left, where he formed in *i*. But if the reader will examine the Diagram XIV, and compare the position of General Scott's battalion *d*, with that of Towson's artillery on the left of the 25th regiment, it will be perceived that to charge between the guns of that battery, Scott's battalion must have first moved down the line in rear of the 25th regiment, and then wheeled to the right, whilst there was no obstacle in the way to a charge to the front, which being perpendicular to his line, was the most natural and convenient; and this is the idea of an intelligent officer, who was on the ground, and it is for this reason, and this only, I have given the battalion that direction in this *frantic* charge, because the merits of the operation cannot be affected by this or that description of it. We have Colonel Leavenworth's authority for the passage of this ill-fated detachment out by the

and passes between the contending ranks of the two armies.

course it was foolish. It surely could not have been calculated for the stage effect, with which it has been since employed, because the impending scenes were of too awful a cast for such levity; and it could not have been for the same cause that children sometimes whistle in the dark. What then?

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enemy were repulsed. General Ripley made every possible exertion to inspire and encourage his troops, and exposed his person during the hottest of the fire of the enemy. I endeavoured several times to prevail on him to retire, but without effect. His perseverance was unremitted, sometimes acting as file closer as well as commander. He gave his orders with perfect coolness and deliberation, and attended as far as was possible to their proper execution. The witness never knew him more collected.*

"General Ripley's position was never more than ten or twelve paces in rear of the line; he received two balls through his hat, and his horse was wounded during the encounters: after the last attack, witness was despatched to General Porter by General Ripley, with orders to him to send fifty or one hundred volunteers of his command, to report to Colonel M'Rea, and remove the captured artillery from the heights to the camp at Chippawa. Witness delivered the order, and saw the volunteers detached and marched on the hill."

General Brown and President Madison.

Three ardent, critical and murderous combats had now taken place, since the commanding General Brown was heard of, and yet no measure had been adopted to secure the object of contention, the *captured artillery*. Whether ruminating in the orchard or elsewhere, I am unable to say, as I cannot penetrate the veil of concealment which the executive interposed; but his absence, alone, warrants his condemnation.

Having terminated the fourth and last triumphant struggle between the British and American corps, wherein the blood of valorous men was wasted in a vain conflict, which, excepting the diminution of the human race and the expenditure of ammunition, ended where it began: my attention is necessarily called to General Scott, who, it has been seen, after the *fiery course* he ran from Rip-

General Scott seeks an adventure on the left.

were prevented retreating. The scales were equipoised, and the breath of Heaven decided the balance in favour of the United States. See the statement published at the office of the Boston Patriot, 1814.

* His orders were given in an under key rather than a boisterous tone, and he was careful not to expose his person or his brigade by cheering or shouting, but he appeared to know what he was about; he was rational and collected.

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I regret that Colonel Leavenworth has not been more circumstantial in his account of this particular operation, because it has reached me in a very different shape, through several officers who were concerned in that *chef d'œuvre*, and even from the authority of General Brown himself.

From these sources I derive the following statement, "that General Scott led his column down the lane *h*, *h*, and at that critical period General Brown shewed himself on the hill in quest of the Brigadier, and, discovering his tract, the commander entered the lane and passed several sections in pursuit of him, when the column received a volley in its flank from the enemy, who were posted behind the fence,* and then this exhausted, worn out handful of brave men, broke and retreated in disorder; leaving behind them Captain Pentland, who was wounded, with Lieutenant Perry, who was made prisoner, and the curses of their general, who perceiving that his word of command, "BATTALION, LEFT WHEEL INTO LINE, QUICK MARCH," was no longer heeded by his wearied and almost heart-broken ranks, exclaimed, in a voice of thunder, "THEN YOU MAY ALL GO TO HELL."

His troops are broken and retire.

General Brown wounded.

General Brown, active it seems, if not skilful, retired with the troops, and when leaping a fence near the position Scott had charged from, received a flesh wound in the thigh, as he afterwards stated to Captain M'Donald at Judge Barker's in the state of New York, adding, emphatically at the same time, that he had "GOT HIS WOUND THROUGH THE DAMNED RASHNESS AND FOLLY OF SCOTT."

It appears that General Ripley in this critical exigency, his ranks gradually weakened by death, wounds and fatigue, was warmly engaged and pressed almost to extremity by the enemy in their fourth assault; and it is believed that General Scott, finding his heroic little band

* The Diagram shews it on the left, but in this there is a difference of opinion.

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cut to pieces, in his worse than Quixotic expeditions, with his maledictions as a reward for their devotion and sufferings, left them and retired to the rear of the line, when suddenly recollecting the 25th regiment, which had been long engaged, and had greatly distinguished itself under the gallant Jesup, he proceeded to join it, and, like his chief, received a *lucky* random shot, which relieved him, not as he had done the devoted part of his brigade, from the fatigues of the night, and carried him to camp, whither he was soon followed by General Brown.

General Scott wounded

Colonel Leavenworth states in his narrative that he *formed the remainder of General Scott's brigade*, or more properly the remaining platoon of the consolidated battalion,* a small distance from the left of General Porter, and it seems in rear, say in *m*, as he is soon after discovered ascending the hill, and in his route meets General Scott and General Brown retiring to camp, and is directed by the latter to "*look to General Ripley for orders, as the command of course devolved on him;*" after which the Colonel led his command to the right of the 25th regiment, and took post in *o*, which terminated the *wanderings* of the first brigade on this memorable night; after a loss of forty-two officers, forty-two sergeants, and 446 rank and file, without rendering, from first to last, the smallest service that I can discern.

* Colonel Leavenworth informs us, that after General Scott's second charge, "*he passed through the American line, and joined Colonel Jesup, with the 25th regiment, on the right of that line, and was there wounded;*" but the late Major Pentland says the General was wounded on the left. Colonel Leavenworth proceeds—"*Moving forward to gain the summit of the hill, I was hailed by General Scott, who informed me of his wounds, and ordered me to push forward and join the 25th, and in case the enemy should again return to the contest, to seek an opportunity to charge, and drive them from the field with the bayonet.*" I presume according to the example he had given. In another place, Colonel Leavenworth informs us, that "*after consolidating his battalion with the 25th regiment, the whole did not exceed* 150 *or* 200 *men, exclusive of officers;*" but as he says the brigade marched only 700 strong, and 530 had been put "*hors de combat,*" this number is probably overrated.

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Particular conduct of General Brown, in the affair of Lundy's lane.

I court the strict attention of my readers, and particularly military men, to the following interesting facts. Every corps of General Brown's command was closely and warmly engaged; no reserve was left for his direction; the darkness of the night prevented the exercise of command at twenty paces; the movements of neither army could be discerned; and his troops were several times pressed to an extremity, beyond which every thing would have been lost. Thus critically circumstanced, it does not appear that General Brown once met the enemy in combat, or exposed himself to the fire of their infantry, except when surprised in pursuit of General Scott. But although invisible to the troops whom he should have animated by his presence, and encouraged by exhortation, he remained at no great distance under the hill,*

* *Extract from a publication by General Ripley, published at the Office of the Boston Patriot*, 1815.

"The artillery was captured. That it should at once have been removed to the rear is obvious; this could have been effected in one hour, merely by ordering up the spare horses that were with the reserve of artillery. It then would not have been subject to contingencies. Instead of that, less than half our force was defending it in a most desperate manner: that force by killed, wounded, and stragglers, continually lessened: the enemy was reinforced, and when he retired from the contest, simply retreated under the hill, about 200 yards from our line. Our force had become so diminished, that the last charge compelled the whole line to recoil, and it was with unexampled difficulty that it was recalled. It had become reduced to not more than six hundred exhausted men and almost without officers. General Brown remained on the ground (not on the height but in the rear) in command. His wound was a flesh wound in the thigh, which did not dismount him. Under these circumstances General Ripley first discovered our own artillery to be gone, and in full march towards Chippawa, in consequence, as he afterwards learnt, of orders from General Brown to Colonel Hindman. Next came a peremptory order to collect the wounded and retire. General Ripley was satisfied his troops could not withstand another charge. He attempted to remove the artillery by means of detachments. It was unavailing.

"When General Brown ordered Colonel Hindman "to get off the artillery as well as he could," he might have ordered him to take his pieces to the rear, and then return with his horses and harness and remove the artillery of the enemy; but previously to General Ripley's being ordered to retire, all our artillery had been marched for Chip-

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out of danger, retaining the command* to the exclusion of the intelligence and discretion of those who braved the tug of war. Yet, notwithstanding, his modesty abstracted him from the severe combat in which his troops were two hours engaged, I cannot discover that he took a single step to remove his wounded, or to secure the captured artillery that constituted the bone of contention, for which the best blood of his country was streaming; the cannon removed, the ground of conflict ceased, and his gallant corps could have retired to their camp, with the trophies they had taken. But how could the cause of the country or of humanity interest the affections of a man, nurtured in hostility to the government of that country, whose laws were found insufficient to restrain his cupidity.

In another instance, not so criminal indeed, yet highly culpable, General Brown betrayed great ignorance and neglect of duty. After receiving a flesh wound which did not prevent his keeping his seat on horseback, he tells us in his *dateless* official letter that "*it became his wish to resign the command to General Scott,*"† surely not because of the exemplary skill he had manifested in the action, but "*learning that he was disabled by his wounds,*"

pawa, and it was not till ten days after that General Ripley ascertained by whose orders.

"It will be observed, that our force was almost demolished in defending the captured artillery. In this consisted the radical error, either when the artillery was captured, we should have determined to sleep upon the battle ground, in which case all our stragglers, pickets, and fatigue parties in camp, should have been brought up, or the artillery should at once have been removed to Chippawa, and thereby have saved the severe loss sustained in defending it. Had it been removed when General Ripley made the first request, our loss would have been small, and the "trophies" would have been saved.

"When the troops reached Chippawa, it was computed that there were one thousand men in camp, exclusive of the column which had retired. Had one of the staff been sent, two hours before, to collect this force, the necessity of retiring would in all probability have been obviated."

* See Appendix, No. XI.

† See Appendix, No. XII.

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the commander actually left the field, without communicating to the officer next in command, who not knowing that the chief was either wounded or had retired, continued to hold himself responsible to a superior, and to maintain his position; yet on retiring from the field, General Brown met Colonel Hindman, the commanding officer of artillery, advancing with a supply of ammunition for his guns on the hill, and, after he had abandoned the command,* contrary to every principle and every rule of service, not content to leave Ripley in *the dark* with respect to his own movements, he, without the knowledge of that officer, undertakes to give Colonel Hindman the following extraordinary and peremptory order:—"*Collect your artillery as well as you can, and retire immediately; we shall all march to camp;*" and adding, "*we have done as much as we could; nearly all our officers are killed or wounded; I am myself wounded, and I think it best to retire to camp;*"† and the Colonel might have asked him, wherefore has so much blood been spilt, and for what has all this been "*done?*" The headlong hurry, and peremptory tenor of this order are manifest, and the information proceeds not only from an excellent officer, but a gentleman and a man of honour. This order took away all discretion, not only with respect to the captured artillery, but also to the unfortunate wounded. But what was the immediate effect of this order? To withdraw from General Ripley his most powerful arm, whilst he was left with an exhausted band of 600 men, within three hundred yards of, at least, quadruple force of the enemy. The very critical situation of Ripley may be fairly inferred from the report of Colonel Hindman, to which the particular attention of the reader is requested, because it proves unequivocally, that the enemy were in possession of the ground a few minutes after our troops left it; making prisoners a party detached to bring off a twenty-four

His orders to Colonel Hindman.

Critical situation of the American troops.

* See Appendix, No. XIII.

† See Appendix, No. XIV.

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pounder, and capturing several wagons and horses which had been sent to bring away the wounded.

Justice, however, requires I should state, that General Brown, after leaving the field and giving the order to Colonel Hindman, had proceeded some distance on his way to his camp, before he recollected that he had left General Ripley in a perilous situation; and then he sent back his aid-de-camp Austin, who was met more than half a mile from the position of the troops, with the following order for General Ripley, viz: "*It was General Brown's orders he should march the troops from the field of action to the mouth of Chippawa, where the army was encamped previous to the battle, without delay, and if he was attacked in making his retreat, he should defend himself.*" I forbear to remark on the ridiculous affectation of this order, given at a mile's distance, by a man who had not shewn himself in the fight; it had, however, the merit of arriving in season, to save the shattered relics of our corps, who, although brave to desperation, could not without their artillery have sustained another shock, and must have yielded to superior physical force. But it is deeply to be regretted, and should be engraved on the memory of every true-hearted soldier, and every virtuous independent citizen, *that by the incompetency of General Brown, and the inconsiderate rashness and folly of General Scott, on the 25th of July, 1814, a body of gallant troops, greatly inferior in numbers to the enemy, were committed to a destructive action, under every circumstance of disadvantage; that the artillery of the enemy, won by their valour, together with their wounded comrades, were, through the ignorance and remissness of the commanding General, left on the field of battle, and that the only trophy gained in this sanguinary nocturnal rencontre, was a single piece of ordnance left on the ground by the American army, which cost the contending corps seventeen hundred men.*

General Brown's order to General Ripley.

Cause and effects of the affair of Lundy's lane.

Several interesting particulars subsequent to the affair of the 25th, deserve to be recorded; they are little understood, and the exposition is necessary to cancel the

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impositions which have been practised on the public, under the sanction of President Madison and his war ministers; not to enhance the national renown, but, by the artificial decoration of individual characters, to overawe enquiry, veil folly, mask imposture, and conceal the shame of Bladensburgh, for the promotion of an interested and ambitious policy.

The troops who had been engaged at Lundy's lane reached their camp at Chippawa after midnight, and in his letter without date, written to the Secretary of War several days after, General Brown expresses himself in the following terms: "*about one o'clock in the morning I sent for General Ripley, and after giving him my reasons for the measure I was about to adopt, ordered him to put the troops in the best possible condition; to give to them the necessary refreshment; to take with him the pickets, camp guards, and every other description of forces; to put himself on the field of battle as the day dawned, and there to meet and beat the enemy if he again appeared; to this order he made no objection, and I relied on the execution. It was not executed.*" The perfidy of this report is exposed by Captain M'Donald,* but if we admit the authenticity of it, it caps the climax of folly and extravagance, and were an hundred other proofs wanting, the General has recorded in never-fading colours, the evidence of his own ignorance, and utter incompetency to the exercise of sound military command; yet this gross absurdity, this unmanly malicious innuendo, was received by President Madison as satisfactory proof of the demerits of the officer, who fought the battle and saved the army, which he fostered with that cold maligni-

Extraordinary order of General Brown to General Ripley, with reflections thereon.

President Madison.

* *Extract of a letter from Captain M'Donald, of the 19th Infantry, to General Ripley, dated March 20th, 1815.*

"General Brown, at Judge Barker's, some time between the 5th and 10th of August, asked me many questions respecting the battle of Niagara. After relating to him the circumstances which came under my own view, the General expressed his pleasure at our recollections having served so correctly, *and that to General Ripley he was under strong obligations, for to his gallantry and uniformly good conduct he was indebted for the safety of the army.*"

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ty, so illustrative of his character, in all cases that do not affect his personal interests, or excite his irascibility; until the developments menaced by the inquiry commenced at Troy, extorted a brevet with almost a year's retrospect, and the following attestation of his own perfidy, from the pen of the pliant General Brown, the favoured chief of the hero of Bladensburgh.

"*Washington City, May*, 1815.

"Sir,

Recantation of General Brown.

"My report of the 7th of August created an *impression* in relation to General Ripley *which I by no means intended. I did not intend to implicate his courage, his talents, or his zeal.*

"In that report I stated, that I had given him orders to meet and beat the enemy on the morning of the 26th July. This order was not given until after the command of the army had devolved entirely on General Ripley; and I am fully convinced that circumstances afterwards occurred to satisfy the judgment of General Ripley, that the order could not be executed.

"Justice to myself as well as to the army, requires that I should make this statement.

"I am, &c.

"JACOB BROWN.

"*Hon. Alexander J. Dallas.*"

Motives therefor.

It is of little import by whom this letter was *dictated* or *written*; whether it was prescribed by Colonel Monroe, recommended by Mr. Dallas, or spontaneously offered by General Brown; but it is a fact, that it was a sacrifice to the secret management and venal policy of the cabinet; a base compromise by which the government was dishonoured, and the military peace establishment of the country founded in corruption. Neither General Brown nor General Scott will ever forget I was on the spot, and I write from memoranda taken at the time from some persons who were concerned. Love of country commands me to suppress details. The reader is entreated to peruse

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this letter again, and compare it with the order of General Brown, and if he cannot discern a single trait which should recommend that officer to the chief command of the national forces, he will readily discover those qualities of the heart which form the most effectual passport, to the favour of President Madison and some of his counsellors.

Analysis of General Brown's extraordinary order.

But let us take a glance at this *after-order*, indubitably the result of conjunct labour, as the letter from which it is abstracted was evidently designed, to varnish the conduct of the chief and his coadjutor, without even a decent regard to truth. After a warm, toilsome, and bloody action of several hours, during which the American troops were nearly exhausted by fatigue and thirst; our tottering ranks, which at no time during the combat, possessed strength to improve the advantages gained by repulsing the enemy, retired from the field of contest, leaving behind them, through the failure of providence on the part of the General, not only the captured guns of the enemy, but their wounded, and one 5½ inch howitzer of their own field train. These gallant citizen soldiers, *for a plurality of them were volunteer militia, or recruits on their first campaign*, reached their camp about one o'clock in the morning of the 26th, faint and weak, and reduced by death, wounds, and disability, at least one thousand combatants. At this hour the order is issued for them to be "*on the field of battle as the day dawned.*" Now as the day dawned there at that season of the year, about fifty minutes after three o'clock, this experienced soldier and sage chief, selected and elected by the virtuous enlightened President Madison, as the most valuable bequest to his deluded constituents, allowed the enfeebled troops barely one hour and fifty minutes to cook, eat, clean, and refresh themselves, to draw ammunition, put their arms in order for action, and make a march, which, General Brown informs us, required an hour the evening before, when the troops were fresh. This order was given with an imperfect knowledge of his own strength, and entire ignorance of that of his an-

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tagonist; the movement was directed against strong ground, which had been left in possession of the enemy;* the American corps was dismembered, and seventy-four officers had just been put "*hors de combat;*" and yet in this crippled state did General Brown, without a rational object, attempt to expose to the enemy the army confided to his command; having provided for his own retreat to a place of safety, which would absolve him from future consequences, he hugged himself in the anticipation of the undeserved honours which awaited him, and seemed indifferent to the fate of those who remained behind. This order, in effect, doomed the remainder of the division to the fate of their recently slaughtered brethren, without a thought of the calamitous effects to the public cause; and yet, incredible as it may appear, I have been assured, from authority which I do not question, that the commander who gave this unwarrantable mandate, before he embarked for Buffaloe, consulted two general officers on the practicability of effecting a retreat to Detroit, to so desperate a situation did he consider his corps reduced.

Conduct of Ripley, and retreat of the army.

Agreeably, however, to the order, General Ripley collected the force of the camp, and advanced on the enemy as soon as the troops were organized and equipt for action, but with a caution and circumspection, which saved him from surprise or commitment; he sent out reconnoitring parties before he was within two miles of the theatre of the preceding day's action, and finding the enemy strongly posted in superior force,† he judiciously retired; and then a scene ensued which has been carefully concealed from the public. By the improvidence of General Brown, the deficiency of transport provided for his baggage, stores, and provisions, had not been remedied, and a great portion of it was now found necessary to the accommodation of his wounded and sick; the necessity of a retreat could be no longer concealed or delayed, and the consequences were, that a considerable quantity of provisions,

* See Appendix, No. XV.

† See Appendix, No. XVI.

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stores, and camp equipage, with a number of tents, were thrown into the river, or burnt; I have this fact from an officer left with the command which performed this duty.

General Drummond's official letter examined.

General Drummond's official report* exhibits a strong contrast to that of General Brown, and is equally deficient in several matters of fact, notorious to the whole American corps. The attack of his left, which he ascribes to a heavy force, was the operation of the 25th regiment alone, under that discreet, intelligent, decisive officer, Colonel Jesup,† of whose precise movements I have not been able to procure satisfactory information; it is however certain that he advanced upon the enemy's left with not more than 200 men, brought them to close action, forced them to give ground, and in the confusion incident to a night attack and the shifting of the action, he captured General Rial, and almost as many prisoners as he had bayonets. I have no authority to question General Drummond's report, of his own order of battle or his force, except from the information of Colonel Leavenworth and other officers; but the preceding details will expose its fallacy, as it relates to the number of the American troops, the disposition of the attack, and conduct of the action throughout; particularly, in respect to the capture of his battery, which was carried in the dark by surprise, and was afterwards maintained by valour, in spite of his reiterated, obstinate, and gallant charges, for more than two hours, until the troops of the United States retired by command, in column by the left, deliberately and in good order. General Drummond was attacked on his own ground, from which he was forced,

Colonel Jesup, his conduct contrasted with Scott's.

* See Appendix, No. XVII.

† Compare the efficient conduct of this officer with the mad career of Scott; the first by his judicious operations destroying the enemy, the other with threefold numbers destroyed by his own *folly* and *rashness*—

"Discretion
And hardy valour, are the twins of honour;
And nurs'd together, make a conqueror:
Divided, *but a talker.*"

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and the Americans occupied and held it, until he appeared to have withdrawn from the contest; they then leisurely fell back on their camp, and were not pursued; he therefore had no right to claim a victory; the howitzer which he mentions was not *taken in action*, or *forced* from the American troops, but was left on the field, I understand, in consequence of damage to the carriage, the fatigue of the troops, and darkness of the night. Yet it is due to candour to acknowledge, that the issue of the action resulted in the fruits of a dear bought victory; and it follows that our pretensions to the triumph were without foundation, but in *the vanity and ostentation of our chief and his coadjutor.*

Returns of killed and wounded compared.

The returns *g*, of the killed, wounded, and missing, on both sides, will shew that the numerical loss of the enemy exceeded; yet it will appear from the same documents, which may, I have no doubt, be relied on, that the affair was most destructive to the troops of the United States. The enemy had five officers killed, 37 wounded, and 15 missing; the American troops had eleven officers killed, 56 wounded, and 8 missing; the former had 84 of all ranks killed, 559 wounded, and 235 missing; the latter 171 of all ranks killed, 552 wounded, and 112 missing. And as an irrefragable proof of the weak and wanton exposition of Scott's brigade, it will be found on comparison, that he had six officers killed, 31 wounded, and five missing, whilst the residue of the American army had but five officers killed, 25 wounded, and three missing. Scott's killed of all ranks were 108, his wounded 350, and his missing 50;* whilst of the dragoons, artillery, 1st regiment, 2d brigade, and volunteers, the amount of the killed of all ranks was 63, the wounded 221, and the missing 59. Thus the conduct of the several corps are placed before the reader, and the result will enable him to form a clear and candid estimate of the merits of the most *conspicuous actors*, and to decide who is best entitled to *public distinction and national confidence;* he who being

* This is exclusive of artillery, &c.

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involuntarily drawn into a disadvantageous conflict, cautiously and judiciously, but resolutely maintains the interest and honour of the American arms; or he, who, indifferent to both but as the step-stones of his ambition, seeks unnecessary perils solely to emblazon his professional character with the blood of his fellow-men? It is not a fiction, but under Mr. Madison's commendable administration, has became a prevalent sentiment, that an officer is warranted in sacrificing his corps for empty renown; a more erroneous, or a more dangerous opinion, cannot be infused into the minds of the rising generation; since nothing can be more obvious than the distinction between the chief, who, like General Washington and General Greene, fosters the lives of his troops, for the exclusive safety of the state to which they belong; or he, who, like Brown and Scott, wickedly appropriates, or blindly and rashly sacrifices, the blood and lives of the soldiery entrusted to their command, to promote selfish views or sinister ambition. The first is a Christian hero and patriot, the last an Infidel and desperado. For myself, now a mere passenger, yet devoted to the solid interests of my country, I write to expose imposture, correct delusion, and warn my fellow citizens against the tricks, artifices and frauds, which have been practised to impose on their understanding, and mislead the public judgment; happy if I may succeed to render them service, and content in the conscientious discharge of my duty.

> "Oh! that estates, degrees and offices,
> Were not deriv'd corruptly! and that clear honour
> Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!
> How many then would cover, who stand bare!
> How many be commanded who command!
> How much low "*vanity*" would then be glean'd
> From the true seed of honour! and how much honour
> Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times,
> To be new varnished?"

I had closed this chapter when I received a letter from the late Brevet-major Pentland, of which the following is an extract; the conspicuous merits of this officer are

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acknowledged, and his character as a man stamps authenticity on his report. He commanded the advanced guard of the first brigade on the 25th of September, 1814, and by General Scott's inversion of his order of march, was thrown into the rear, whilst the 22d regiment to which he belonged was carried to the front; the effect of this *improvement in military tactics*, was to bring Captain Pentland and his guard up the right of the line, formed at the opening of the wood in *a*, *a*, that is, on the right flank of the 9th regiment, where he continued to act until he had his leg broke, and was abandoned to the enemy, in the General's last senseless charge at the lane.

Extract of a letter from the late Brevet-major Pentland, to General James Wilkinson, dated Pittsburgh, Dec. 16th, 1816.

"General Scott's third position was near a farm to the left of the second position, where we halted a short time without firing, Colonel Miller having previously carried the heights and silenced the enemy's battery; we then advanced to Lundy's lane, and were formed in column, left in front, which threw my company into the rear, as it was formed on the right of the 9th regiment. After being in this situation a few minutes, and before we moved, Captain Spencer, the aid-de-camp of General Brown, rode up to me, and observed, that with my company I could intercept two of the enemy's ammunition wagons, which had lost their way, and was then within our lines. I asked permission of General Scott, who refused, saying there was something of more importance in view; and orders were immediately given to advance, as I thought, for the purpose of breaking the left flank of the enemy's line. As soon as we were discovered, *in passing the church*, the enemy opened a most destructive fire upon us, which was immediately followed from a different direction, and, as I conceived, nearly at right angles, which produced a terrible carnage; being, as I was, in the rear of the column, I had an opportunity of

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seeing the killed and wounded. I cannot tell whether it was Porter's volunteers or Ripley's brigade which fired on us. It was absurd to suppose, that any men engaged as long as we had been, without water, and nearly exhausted, could stand such a fire; the column was of course broken and fled to a lane on the left, where we were immediately after formed in column, right in front, and advanced a second time. General Scott, Lieutenant Perry, and myself, were at the head of the column; we had moved but a short distance, when another destructive fire was opened upon us; I was wounded just at the fence; Lieutenant Perry was made prisoner by my side; and General Scott was wounded in the shoulder.

"Our men were in general cool and collected, and fought bravely, and I never saw men form with such rapidity as they did, after being broken the first time. It was with pain I saw brave men falling in these charges, without having done much execution, and at last compelled to retire from superior numbers. I have seen a publication which does great honour to the 9th regiment. I have a great respect for the officers who composed that battalion, but think the 22d regiment deserves at least as much credit. Colonel Leavenworth well knows, that after I had joined the line with the remnant of my company, that I was during the whole of the engagement on the right of the 9th. It is not my desire to tear the laurels from the brows of particular persons or battalions, but witnessing as I did, the bravery and good conduct of the 22d regiment, I cannot see the praises due to that battalion lavished on the 9th, or any other corps, without entering my protest; and as General Brown never deigned to notice a regiment, which fought and bled to establish him in the confidence of his country, I have taken the liberty of digressing, well knowing your object is to do justice to all, and being persuaded you will pardon me."

But for the fortunate receipt of this letter, it will be perceived, that I should have rendered great injustice to the 11th and 22d regiments, in consequence of my reli-

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ance on such information as I had been able to collect; but it is a fact, that in all my researches for information, touching the operations on the strait of Niagara, and the invasion of the city of Washington in 1814, I have experienced either profound silence, or a trembling reluctance to communicate, springing out of a fearful apprehension of giving offence to the dependents on the public will, and the servants of the people. Gracious Father! from what a proud height has my country fallen, and how much has the power of the administration increased, and the independence of the citizen declined.

This letter of Major Pentland furnishes a strong illustration of the different views battalion and platoon officers will form of the same operations on a field of battle; but in the main it corroborates the information I had previously received of General Scott's frantic, foolish, and inhuman charges, in which he exposed the unfortunate men he commanded to be cut to pieces, without rendering the smallest service; and I am thankful that he has enabled me to give publicity to his ideas of the second charge, and the time and place General Scott received his wound, though the Major differs expressly from Colonel Leavenworth on this point; and also from General Brown's account, to Captain M'Donald, of the conduct of the troops, which is supported by the circumstance of Captain Pentland being left on the field, to fall into the hands of the enemy; for if the troops had retired by order, he surely would have been brought off; and as it was extremely dark, and Captain Pentland himself being severely wounded by the first fire of the enemy, he may also be mistaken in the circumstance of General Scott's receiving his wound at the time, because such an incident would hardly have escaped the knowledge of Colonel Leavenworth, who was second in command of the remnant of the consolidated battalion; and the Colonel says General Scott passed to the right, joined Major Jesup, and was wounded there; and it is a fair presumption General Scott would not have abandoned his little command, if the men had not broke.

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Whatever may be the fact, I have felt it my duty to make this explanation, in justice to those concerned, and for the information of the reader.

The representation of Captain Pentland determined me to take a comparative view of the loss of the 9th, 11th, and 22d battalions respectively; and if their conduct and services at Lundy's lane, are to be estimated by the rule of President Madison, for determining the merits and qualifications of his Generals, viz. the quantum of blood they may have been instrumental in spilling, then the 11th and 22d take the palm from the 9th, because it will appear from the return, that both of the former bled more freely and dealt more liberally in death than the latter.

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Preliminary Reflections.—Enemy enters the Chesapeake.—Their disgraceful conduct there.—Attempts Craney Island and Hampton.—Enormities committed.—Admiral Warren enters the Potowmack.—Alarm produced.—The idea of a Lieutenant-general being appointed, and the rivalry it gave rise to.—Military motions of the Secretary of War and of the Secretary of State referred to.—Force and Works to defend the Capital.—Reports of the Committee on Military Affairs.—Caution against Military Imposture.—Fort Washington on the Potowmack first called Warburton.—Fortifications unequal to resist Ships of the line when within grape and canister range.—Opinions of Naval Officers referred to.—Public sentiment and Presidential conduct.—Enemy commence their depredations in the Chesapeake.—Commodore Barney's Flotilla engages the enemy and retires to St. Leonard's Creek.—Proposed destruction of the Flotilla.—Prevented by the enterprise of Colonel Wadsworth.—Wilkinson arrives at Washington in company with General Winder.—Conversation which ensued between them.—Wilkinson expresses his solicitude for the safety of the Capital.—Gives his opinions on that subject, and particularly to Mr. Carroll, and invites him and General Mason to examine the practicable defences of the city.—Certificate of Charles Carroll, Esq. and of the same Gentleman conjointly with General Mason.—Reasons for making this communication to these gentlemen.—Reflections on the pending Measures of Government.—Others recommended.—Advice received from Messrs. Bayard and Gallatin of the enemy's intentions.—Plan for calling out troops and Militia.—Corps of Volunteers offer their services, which are rejected by the President.—Cabinet and Heads of Departments unknown to the Constitution.—Tenth Military District created and General Winder appointed to com-

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mand.—Finds the District destitute of munitions of war and troops.—Militia requisition for 93,500 men. —So worded as to defeat the remedy it pretended to prescribe.—The embarrassments with which General Winder was surrounded.—Proposes a remedy, but receives no answer to his applications.—President Madison's conduct inconsistent with his information.—Bad condition of the defences and want of ammunition.—Distraction which ensued the landing of the enemy.—The line of conduct President Madison ought to have pursued. —Wilkinson proposes to Colonel Monroe to suspend his arrest, and offers to save the City.—His plan of annoyance and defence.—Wilkinson, not receiving an answer to his note, leaves Washington.—Inefficient equipment of the Militia.—Perplexities of General Winder's situation, and the paucity of his means.—Movement of the force from the City and the enemy from Benedict.—Transactions of the 22d of August.—Conduct General Winder should have pursued.—Its probable effects on General Ross.—Winder falls back on his main body, and Ross proceeds to Upper Marlborough.—Barney's Flotilla blown up.—Barney with his men joins the army.—Description of the American camp on the night of the 22d.—President Madison reviews his army.—Admiral Cockburn's correspondence referred to.—General Ross moves five miles out of Marlborough and encamps.—President Madison concentrates his force and determines on a general action.—General Winder's plan of operations considered. —The President retires and the troops follow him.—The disorderly retreat from the Old Fields accounted for.— Ross's intention of attacking the American camp.—Disposition of the American troops on the night of the 23d.— General Winder's design approved.—Other operations recommended, and their evident consequences.—The policy of hanging on the enemy as he entered the Capital.—The folly of expecting the enemy by the lower bridge, and the facility of defending it demonstrated.—Letter of an officer of intelligence quoted.—Proof of President Madison's actual command.—General Ross marches from Bladens-

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burgh.—The President's ignorance of the enemy's approach.—Mr. Secretary Monroe proposes to General Stansbury to fall on the enemy's rear.—The latter prevented by his orders.—False alarms in the camp of General Stansbury.—Movement of General Stansbury's command.—Formation of the line.—Arrival of President Madison and his suite, and approach of the enemy.—Cavalry movements.—Atlas No. XVII. referred to.—Disposition of the American army considered.—The President presents himself to the troops.—Description of General Ross's force carried into action.—What ought to have been the conduct of President Madison.—His conduct in the field.—Its effects on the Militia.—Good conduct of the Baltimore Volunteers.—Description of the attack of the British.—Movement of Colonel Thornton.—Conduct of Commodore Barney, Captain Miller, and their corps.—Colonel Beale's statement quoted.—His conduct.—Mr. I. E. Howard, and a glance at the affair of the Cowpens.—Remarks on the order for retreat.—Reference to the loss of the Marine corps and the enemy.—The President flies from the Capital.—The Navy Yard, &c. set on fire.—Wilkinson's advice remembered.—Order for the retreat to the heights of Georgetown.—Enemy enter the Capital.—The Conflagration.—Extracts from the Annual Register.—Reflections on the catastrophe.—The enemy retreats from the city of Washington.

Preliminary reflections.

TROY, after a vigorous siege and gallant defence of ten years, was taken by stratagem. CARTHAGE too, was doomed to destruction, but her fall was preceded by long, obstinate, and bloody wars of varied fortune. On a recent occasion the enslaved Muscovite, after manly exertion had failed, and almost every resource had been exhausted, applied the torch to his ancient capital to save his country; but in this our enviable land of freedom, we have since beheld the temple of liberty, our wives, our children, and our household Gods, abandoned by their legitimate protector to the devastation of a vindictive enemy.

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The transactions which led to this shameful catastrophe, will form the subject of this chapter; and it is to be deplored, that justice to an injured country, and the character of its defamed citizens, should make it necessary to raise the veil of concealment; that the world may be enabled to distinguish clearly between the imbecility and improvidence of the commander, and the zeal and promptitude of the troops; between the patriotism and devotion of the citizen, prepared for every sacrifice in defence of the metropolis, and the turpitude of President Madison, who, after neglecting every necessary means for its protection, fled before the invading enemy, and surrendered it without a struggle.

But before I enter into the details of General Ross's operations, which terminated at the city of Washington, in the destruction of the public edifices, the provisions, stores, arms, naval equipments, and the vessels of war in port, it is proper to call the attention of the reader to antecedent incidents; which will evince that the seat of government was threatened by the enemy, a year before the actual invasion, and yet during the long interval, whilst millions were expended in fortifications at various seaports, President Madison and his counsellors did not take a single precautionary measure for the defence of the national capital; notwithstanding the solicitude of its patriotic inhabitants, manifested by repeated applications to the Secretary of War, and to the President personally.

Enemy enters the Chesapeake.

By reference to the chronicles of that day, we shall perceive that early in the spring of 1813, the enemy, under Admiral Cockburn, entered the Chesapeake, with a respectable naval force, and the usual complement of marines; and being apprised of the accumulation of a considerable quantity of public property, at a landing near the head of the bay called Frenchtown, he visited that place on the 29th of April, and, by the defective arrangement of the war department, succeeded in destroying the military equipments and munitions of war found there; of which, I apprehend, the public never received any correct account. A species of piratical warfare ensued this

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exploit, disgraceful to the service and dishonourable to the soldier, because directed against unarmed men, or women and children, and having for its object the pillage and destruction of private property, and the annoyance of defenceless villages on the head waters of the Chesapeake. These wanton depredations were continued for ten days or a fortnight, during which time the city of Baltimore was menaced, and kept in alarm by the disposition of the ships of war off the harbour; but about the first of June, Cockburn, unexpectedly, weighed anchor and descended the bay to join Admiral Warren, who had just arrived with a naval reinforcement, a detachment of marines, and a corps designated "Chasseurs Britanniques," composed of foreign renegadoes under British officers. Soon after this junction, on the 22d of June, an attempt was made against Craney Island, by a force exceeding 1200 men, who were repulsed with disgrace, by a detachment of about 700 raw troops, sailors and marines, without the loss of a man. It would appear, that to avenge this discomfiture, the enemy, on the 25th, attacked the village of Hampton, which, being without fortifications, and defended by a handful of militia only, was carried without difficulty; and the scenes which ensued dishonour humanity, shame the Christian world, and have left a stain on the character of the British arms, which will never be forgotten, and cannot be effaced but by the extinction of the corps, and the blood of the individuals concerned in the unmanly, barbarian atrocities perpetrated on that occasion. After two or three days pillage, rape, riot and murder at Hampton, the enemy re-embarked, and, about the 12th or 14th of July, Admiral Warren entered the Potowmack with a considerable armament, took possession of Blackstone's Island, and pushed some of his light vessels up as high as the difficult pass of the Kettle Bottoms, which they were observed to sound; and this being interpreted into a meditated attack of the metropolis, strong excitements were produced at Washington, at a time when Congress

Their disgraceful conduct there.

Attacks Craney Island and Hampton. Enormities committed

Admiral Warren enters the Chesapeake, and alarm produced.

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The idea of a Lieutenant-general being appointed, and the rivalry it gave rise to.

Military motions of the Secretary of War and of the Secretary of State referred to.

happened to be in session. The idea of a Lieutenant-general had just been started, and the rival candidates for the appointment entered into a competition for public distinction, in which the advantages were greatly on the side of the war minister, who had the President in subordination, and of consequence possessed the exclusive authority to dispose of the military force, and the implements and engines of war were subject to his discretion also. He accordingly repaired to a narrow pass of the river, about fourteen miles below the city, defended by a wretched work called Fort Washington, and ordered the diminutive force assembled for the defence of the capital to the vicinity of the same place. The Secretary of State, also a soldier of the revolution, although his office did not give him military command, determined not to be outdone in demonstrations of zeal; he therefore assembled a select suite, and resolved to take the lead of his competitor, by throwing himself immediately on the right flank of the enemy; and whilst his rival awaited the approach of danger, within the walls of Fort Washington, he determined to seek it on the left bank of the Potowmack; and having drawn around him a party of yeomanry, I have understood, a skirmish ensued, that blood was spilt, and a meditated attack of Blackstone's Island, for the purpose of capturing Admiral Warren, was marred by the jealousy or invidious spirit of the war minister, who refused to the Secretary of State a small detachment requested for the purpose. *During these scenes of mummery, when the pen was exchanged for the sword, and ministers of the cabinet were seen to consign their bureaus, and the business of the nation to their clerks; and honest and well intentioned members of the legislature, contemplated such patriotic sacrifices with admiration and wonder;* an incident took place in congress which must not be omitted, because it will furnish a strong instance, of the blind subserviency of that august body to the artifice of a minister, and of their ignorance of the actual state of things under their own eyes.

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Force and works to defend the capital.

It must be observed, that at the time to which I refer, there was not within succouring distance of Washington any organised militia of the states, nor regular force except a few hundred raw recruits of the 36th and 38th regiments, the district militia partly unarmed and miserably formed, and the defence of the river depending on the sloop of war Adams, with a few small gunboats, and Fort Washington, a mere water battery, of twelve or fifteen guns, bearing upon the channel in the ascent of the river, but useless the moment a vessel had passed; this work was seated at the foot of a steep acclivity, from the summit of which the garrison could have been driven out by musketry, but this height was protected by an octagonal Block house, built of brick, and of two stories altitude, which being calculated against musketry only, could have been knocked down by a twelve pounder; and in this exposed situation of the national capital, July 15, 1813, with scarcely a shadow of defence by land or water, upon a motion of Mr. Stuart, a meritorious revolutionary veteran, to distribute arms and embody the militia of the district, a reference was made to the military committee, and on the next day the following report was presented to the House of Representatives.

Report of the committee on military affairs.

"The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred a resolution of yesterday, having relation to the present movement of the enemy, report,

"*That they have examined into the state of preparation, naval and military, made to receive the enemy, and are satisfied that the preparation is, in every respect, adequate to the emergency, and that no measures are necessary on the part of the house to make it more complete.*"*

* The interference of congress with the duties of the executive, are certainly usurpatory, except in great national emergencies, when the public safety becomes the supreme law, or in case of manifest corruption; but then the inquiry should be radical. In the case referred to, the chairman of the committee is a gentleman, whom I reverence for his head and his heart; but his own high and delicate sense of patriotism and honour, subjected him to imposition.

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When we advert to the short interval for inquiry, between the reference and the report, it is manifest the examination must have been confined to the capital, and it necessarily follows that the Secretary of War must have been the source of information; the soundness of General Stuart's motion, and the fallacy of this report, have been established by melancholy events; *and the incident should warn the representatives of the people, not to pin their faith to a minister's sleeve, or to place implicit confidence in his information, when he is interested to deceive; which may well happen, since offices have been converted to the use of their incumbents.*

A caution against ministerial imposture.

If we may judge of the preparations to receive the enemy at that period, from the condition in which the metropolis was found a year afterwards, it is a fair conclusion that if Admiral Warren had pressed forward, the national capital would have been sacked in the year 1813; for I am of opinion, and nautical men will bear me out in the position, that with a leading wind and tide, and a free channel, the battery of fifteen guns at Warburton would not have prevented the passage of a frigate; and all obstructions above being removed, the troops might have followed in their launches and barges under cover of the night, close in with the western shore, and landed above Greenleaf's point the next morning; or they might have landed below Piscataway creek,* and, by a short march, have taken the battery in reverse and carried it, as we had no force in the field competent to oppose them. Fort Washington was originally designed to protect Alexandria and the city *against the predatory enterprises of light squadrons*, and will be found of little use in *repelling an invasion*, until it is covered by a strong compact work on the crown of the hill, which is well adapted to such a fortification, being difficult of access on three sides.

Fort Washington on the Potowmack first called Warburton.

On the subject of water batteries I will offer another sentiment, which may be found worthy examination, at a time when millions of expense may be contemplated in the erection of fortifications, on the Horse-shoe in the

* See Atlas.

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Chesapeake, and the Pea-patch in the Delaware. It is, that no fortification can resist the attack of ships of the line, when their respective batteries are nearly on a level, and the distance within grape and canister range, because of the condensation of the fire and the cover of the combatants on ship board; and it is an equally sound maxim, that when vessels of war cannot approach to point blank distance, the advantage will be on the side of the land battery; the following report may in some shape help to illustrate my ideas.

Fortifications unequal to resist ships of the line when within grape and canister range.

Copy of the opinions of the commanders of H. M. ships in the Chesapeake, relative to Old Point Comfort, dated Richmond, Hampton Road, July 26th, 1781.

"My Lord,

"In consequence of a requisition that your Lordship received from the Commanders in Chief of His Majesty's troops and ships, relative to a post being established at Old Point Comfort, for the protection and security of the King's ships that may occasionally be sent to the Chesapeake, we whose names are hereunto subscribed have taken as accurate a survey of that place as possible, and are unanimously of opinion from the width of the channel and *depth of water close to it*, that any superior enemy's force coming in may pass any work that can be established there, with little damage, or *destroy* it, with the ships that may be there under its protection.

Opinions of naval officers referred to.

"We have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) "CHARLES HUDSON,
"THOMAS SYMONDS,
"CHARLES EVERITT,
"RALPH DUNDAS."

Lieut. Gen. the Earl Cornwallis.

But it appeared that Admiral Warren entered the Potowmack to water his ships, and take a survey of the pass of the Kettle Bottoms, with views to ulterior operations; and having accomplished these objects, he sailed from

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the Chesapeake early in the autumn, and in the month of November, the marines, who were engaged in the attack of Craney Island, arrived at Quebec.

Public sentiment and Presidential conduct.

It was understood generally before the enemy left the Chesapeake, from the conversation held by numbers of their officers with the inhabitants, that Admiral Warren would be relieved by an officer disposed to act with more vigour, and that the Chesapeake, the ensuing season, would again become the theatre of operations; and it is a matter of fact, that apprehensions were pretty generally entertained by men of consideration, that an attack would be made on the seat of government or the city of Baltimore; yet, President Madison slumbered over the menaced danger, whilst the Secretary of War made no concealment of his opinions, and treated as chimerical the idea that the enemy meditated the attack of the capital; and the only measure of precautionary defence, which has come to my knowledge, was the very feeble one resorted to in the equipment of barges, for the command of Commodore Barney.

The enemy commence their depredations in the Chesapeake.

The enemy commenced their depredations on the lower waters of the Chesapeake, early in March, 1814, at which time the blockading squadron consisted of five vessels of war, which were from time to time reinforced with various rates, from armed brigs and sloops of war to ships of the line. It appears that the armed barges under Commodore Barney were sent down the Chesapeake from Baltimore in May, under the delusive idea, I presume, that they could check the predatory enterprises of the enemy, for which they were either too heavy or too light. This flotilla sailed out of the Patuxent the 1st of June, fell in with several vessels of the enemy, and returned the same day; they were pursued, and after the exchange of a few long shot for rockets, the Commodore proceeded three or four miles up the Patuxent, leaving a seventy-four and an armed schooner at anchor off the mouth of that river. Commodore Barney kept his station until the 6th or 7th of the month, when perceiving the enemy was reinforced by several lighter vessels, he

Commodore Barney's flotilla engages the enemy, and retires to St. Leonard's creek.

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retired, and, instead of running up the river, took refuge in St. Leonard's Creek, where he was blockaded on the 8th. The depredations on the coasts of the Patuxent, produced by this position of the enemy, their proximity to the capital, and the defenceless state of the country, caused great inquietude to every reflecting citizen, and irreparable injuries to many individuals, whilst the dosing executive was chiefly perplexed by the difficulty of subsisting the crews; and, at length concluding the situation of these boats to be a desperate one, he, without an attempt to relieve them, consigned the whole to destruction; and the gallant Barney, with anguish of heart, was about to execute the order, when their destiny was suspended by an incident, which I shall trespass on the reader.

Proposed destruction of the flotilla.

Colonel Wadsworth, who had served in the corps of engineers, and was now at the head of the ordnance department, proposed, with a battery of heavy guns in cooperation with the flotilla, to drive the blockading frigates from their moorings, and make an opening for Barney to escape up the river; the proposition was listened to by the Secretary of War, and Wadsworth undertook the conduct of the enterprise; Barney's orders were countermanded, the flotilla was again equipt, and Wadsworth proceeded with two 18 pounders on travelling carriages, protected by a detachment of marines and regular troops. He established his battery behind an elevated ridge near the mouth of the creek, and a simultaneous attack, of the gun barges and battery, was made on the frigates the morning of the 26th July, which succeeded to expectation; the enemy fell down the river to Point Patience, and Barney proceeded up to Benedict. But this enterprise, projected by Wadsworth, who volunteered in the public service beyond the limits of his regular duty, and was exclusively entitled to the credit of it, although completely successful in its object, was contrived to throw a cloud of obloquy over that officer, which the executive beheld with cruel indifference, and encouraged by his silence. Of what must the heart be formed, which animates

Prevented by the enterprise of Colonel Wadsworth.

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such a breast? The frigates driven from their stations, were the Loire and Narcissus, Commodore Brown; and the following statement, from an authentic source, will explain the true motives of the enemy, for abandoning the blockade of St. Leonard's Creek: "I was returning," says my informant, "from the Tangier Islands, with a letter from Admiral Cockburn to Captain Brown, commanding the British squadron in the Patuxent, and on the morning of the 26th met the Loire and Narcissus near Point Patience; I boarded the former, and found Captain Brown, at the time, standing on the taffrail, engaged in attentively examining the banks of the river; he shortly afterwards ordered the vessels to cast anchor, observing as he descended to the deck, "there is no ground here which my guns will not rake," and then gave orders for burning Doctor Somerwell's houses, to prevent, as he said, our artillery from moving down and renewing their attack under cover of them. In the course of an hour's conversation with him, he detailed the affair which had just taken place at the mouth of the creek, and explicitly declared, "that he had retired from his position opposite the mouth of the creek, from the apprehension of continued annoyance and ultimate destruction from the land battery, which occupied a position on an height which his guns could not command, as his shot either fell short or passed over, and he had no force which he could land to carry the battery."

Wilkinson arrives at Washington in company with General Winder.

I arrived at the city of Washington the 26th or 27th of June, in company with General Winder; the recurrence of the relentless disease, by which I had been afflicted for more than nine months, dismounted me on the route from Baltimore, and I took passage in a passing vehicle, wherein I found the General alone; I had observed in the public prints various accounts of the predatory incursions of the enemy on the Potowmack and the Patuxent, and knowing that this species of warfare, whilst it degraded the British force, did not warrant the expense of the equipment, because it could not advance any solid interest of the war; I was satisfied that, besides

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the gratification of individual cupidity, the plundering parties of the enemy were made to cover the *reconnaisance*, of the most practicable approaches to the capital, and at the same time to cheat the President into a state of security. The enemy had previously surveyed the difficult pass of the Kettle Bottoms on the Potowmack, and on the 12th July, 1814, Admiral Cockburn exhibited to a public officer of the United States a complete chart of the Patuxent up to Benedict, which he said had been "taken by Captain Nourse of the navy, with a view to ulterior objects;" and they had at that period been in possession of the Chesapeake more than a year, and from the general course of their conduct, nay! from the undisguised menaces of Admiral Cockburn, their object could not be mistaken, though the accomplishment of it could have been easily prevented.

Conversation which ensued between them.

With these impressions, I expressed myself freely to General Winder, and did not conceal my apprehensions that the obstinacy and self-conceit of the Secretary of War* might sacrifice the seat of government, and for prevention I recollect observing to him, that a camp of observation of 3000 or 4000 of the best troops which could be assembled, no matter of what composition, provided they were the best to be had, should be immediately established on some healthy position in the neighbourhood of Upper Marlborough, or between that place and the Potowmack, under the direction of experienced active officers. That association would beget acquaintance, and inspire mutual confidence, and the drill would establish uniformity of movement and habits, and that their numbers could readily be so magnified, as to discourage the enterprise of the enemy." I know not what impression my conversation made on General Winder, but I very well recollect the tenor of it. I understood from him that he had been appointed Adjutant-general of the army, and was then proceeding to Washington for orders; and he consulted me respect-

* I had long known that the poor President was a nose of wax in his fingers, and that in military affairs he is a mere writer and talker, not an actor.

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ing his right to lineal command, as an adjunct to his staff functions, to which there could be no just exception; and I think I quoted to him the case of Major-general Greene, Quarter-master-general, of Major-general the Baron Steuben, Inspector-general, and Colonel Otho H. Williams, deputy Adjutant-general to the Southern army, under General Greene, who fought his own regiment, and with inimitable gallantry crossed bayonets with the enemy at Eutaw.

Wilkinson expresses his solicitude for the safety of the capital.

I was confined to my bed and chamber several days after I reached Washington, but omitted no occasion to express to those who called on me, my solicitude for the safety of the capital; and I recollect suggesting to John Skinner, Esquire, deputy commissary of prisoners, and purser to the flotilla, the same idea I offered to General Winder respecting a camp of observation near Upper Marlborough, with the expectation he might convey the idea to the Secretary of the Navy. On leaving my chamber, I discovered that the most lively apprehensions for the safety of the city, prevailed throughout all ranks and characters, excepting the President and his cabinet; I was frequently asked my opinion, and was so loud and unreserved in the expression of my conviction, of the enemy's designs against the place, that I expected every day to be sent into exile, for I was already in arrest. Among the number of inquirers, my respectable, respected, and dear friend, Charles Carroll, Esq. of Bellevue, asked me, whether I believed the enemy would make an attempt on the city, and on my answering in the affirmative, he requested my reasons, which I gave in brief, "*to signalise their arms, to depreciate our consequence in the eyes of their European allies, and to increase our own divisions and discontents; besides, I can discern no obstacle in the way of the enterprise, and the neglect of the executive will operate as a temptation to produce it.*" I remember that I was dining with Mr. Carroll on this occasion, in company with Mr. Jones, then Secretary of the Navy, whose opinions on the subject I did not understand, and since I have mentioned this gentleman, to

Gives his opinions on that subject particularly to Mr. Carroll, and invites him and General Mason to examine the practicable defences of the city.

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prevent misapprehension, I profess it is not my intention to include him in any censure I may apply to Mr. Madison or his administration; because, after an acquaintance of twenty years, without any particular connexion, I believe him to be a man of independent spirit, with a warm and honourable heart. In the course of my conversation with Mr. Carroll, who had a large property at hazard, and took a strong interest in the welfare of his country, I expressed my surprise that the President, who was so highly responsible for the safety of the city, should take no steps for its security, and observed, that if a force could not be found to defend it in the field, it might in two weeks, with due encouragement from the executive, be put in a state of defence which would enable the citizens of the district alone to repel a *coup de main*, the only mode of attack the enemy could, in my judgment, make; my earnestness on the occasion induced me to add, that if he and General John Mason would do me the honour to accompany me on a short ride, I would point out to them the facility with which this object might be accomplished; a day was named, the gentlemen called on me, and the following testimonial will substantiate the preceding statement, and explain what followed:

Certificate of Charles Carroll, Esquire.

"At the request of General James Wilkinson, I feel much pleasure in detailing the substance of a conversation I had with him about the first of July last. I asked him, whether the enemy, then hovering on our coast, did, in his judgment, meditate a visit to this city; to which he replied in the affirmative with great confidence, and gave his reasons at large for this opinion, amongst which he observed, that such an enterprise, were it successful, would produce great effect in Europe, and that the neglect of competent measures of defence tended to invite the attack. The General, at the same time, expressed total want of confidence in the then Secretary of War, General Armstrong, with whom he held no intercourse; remarked, that his situation forbade his communicating

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with the President, but observed that by seasonable precautions, the safety of the city might be secured against a *coup de main*, the only mode by which the enemy could carry it, from their want of land transport. He added, at the same time, that if General Mason and myself would call on him at a time he named, he would expose to us his ideas of the manner by which the public buildings might be defended by the citizens of the district. I cannot charge my memory with particular expressions, but this I recollect well, that he evinced the strongest dispositions to save the honour of our country by defending the capital, and confidently stated the practicability of its defence; and that he would stake his reputation as a military man, and his life on the issue.

"CHARLES CARROLL, *of Bellevue*.

"*May 12th*, 1815."

And of the same gentleman, conjointly with General Mason.

"According to the preceding invitation, the subscribers called on General Wilkinson, on or about the 10th of July last, and accompanied him in an examination of the ground around the central parts of the city, at which time he proposed four points of defence, viz: two redoubts well supplied with artillery, one in the fork of the Tiber and the Potowmack, and the other on the height north of the Pennsylvania Avenue, called Davidson's orchard; the fortification of the capital by ravelins to connect the two blocks and round towers of stone at the angles, with loop-holes to defend the exterior ends of the blocks; the windows to be barricaded with loop-holes for musketry; and the lower floors of the capital, as well as the ravelins, to be sufficiently furnished with artillery, and the preparation of the President's house for the reception of musketry; competent garrisons for these several posts to be detailed, and held in readiness to occupy them, should it become necessary; and suitable munitions of war to be previously deposited in each.

"General Wilkinson appeared to think that such precautions would prevent an attack, and if made, would

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certainly repel it. He mentioned, at the same time, the practicability of defending the navy yard against a sudden incursion, but the particular manner suggested, as to this point, is not now recollected.

"It is but justice to General Wilkinson to state, as we well remember was the case, that on this occasion he manifested extreme solicitude for the capital of his country, that he dwelt on the disgrace its capture would bring on the nation, and that he deplored the peculiar hardship of his own situation, which forbade his bearing arms in its defence.

"J. MASON,
"CH: CARROLL, *of Bellevue.*
"*Washington, 12th April,* 1815."

NOTE.—"I have no recollection of any observations made relative to the defence of the navy yard; this might very well happen, as we were on horseback, and could not always be together.

"C. C. *of B.*"

If these obvious, economical precautions had been adopted, the rival ministers would not have been exposed to the humiliation of advising General Winder, when he reached the capital, "*to rally and form his troops on the heights in the rear of Georgetown.*"

Reasons for making this communication to these gentlemen.

I selected General Mason and Mr. Carroll for this communication, not only from my knowledge of their honour, their zeal and their patriotism, but because of their attachment to the administration and their intimacy with Mr. Madison, to whom, I expected, they might communicate my views, which were directed as well to his reputation, as the interests and honour of my country; whether this communication took place or not, I have not understood; but if it did, it was, like my advice for the defence of New Orleans, treated with phlegmatic indifference; and whilst I am writing this paragraph, instead of those provident measures, so explicitly

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Reflections on the pending measures of the government.

indicated by the incidents of the late war, I behold the tide of ambition sweeping before it the sound principles of the revolution, and even the barriers of the constitution itself; for in what other light can a candid, independent, unambitious citizen, view the train of ministerial devices, imposed on the honest credulity of the representatives of the people, to increase the overbearing influence of the executive, already swelled above the mounds of the constitution, and felt in every hole and corner of the republic. The honest man's heart revolts against artifice and insincerity, in the management of the affairs of this government; what then must be his feelings, when he perceives dispositions in the public servants to expend millions on institutions founded in deception, and not only unnecessary, but in their tendency vicious? Such I consider the propositions now before the congress, which embrace the following objects.

An invalid corps, ostensibly to provide for military unfortunates, and to give it popularity, it is proposed to include those of the revolutionary war, who had been forgotten for thirty-four years, and happen to be provided for in the grave. Stript of the veil, this proposition is a simple device to increase the standing army, which at present exceeds its constitutional limits 1,500. Then three military academies!* For what purpose are they? To foster the universal and inordinate passion† for arms;

* In speaking of the profession of arms, the great, good, and sage Sully, himself an eminent soldier, says: "But unhappy, and even all his life, is he, who being engaged in a profession so fatal to youth, is deficient in strength or inclination to resist bad examples. Though he should have the good fortune to preserve himself from all shameful vice, how shall he instruct and fortify himself in the principles that wisdom dictates alike to the private man and the prince; that virtue be so effectually wrought into habit by practice, that no virtuous action can be ever found painful; *and that when reduced to the necessity of saving all by a crime, or of losing all by a good action,* the heart may be even a stranger to the interior struggles of duty and inclination?"

† We find our youth, from New Hampshire to New Orleans, so impatient for war, that they are seeking service from Mexico to

to infect the rising generation with the mania of indolence and profligacy; to discountenance useful learning and steady habits; and to introduce a spirit of chivalry, destructive of the public happiness, and subversive of the principles of the government. But under the specious plausible pretext of advancing the interests of science and expanding the intellect, it is proposed to saddle the people with a national university, on a site so insalubrious, that the great public functionaries find it necessary annually to abandon their public duties three months out of twelve. A national university at the city of Washington within the purlieus of the court! and wherefore this institution? Is it to infuse the principles of public virtue, and to stamp upon the youthful mind a permanent devotion to republican simplicity, independence, and integrity? No! But to propagate the doctrines of passive obedience and slavish dependence, to assimilate principle to practice, to diffuse intrigue and corruption to the remotest extremes of the union, and to give the finishing stroke to the aristocratic propensities, but too manifest in the executive department. These institutions all tend to the consolidation of the general government, and to the extinction of the real independence of the state governments. If sound and salutary, how happened it, that they should have escaped the attention of Washington, of Adams, and of Jefferson, the distinguished friend and patron of science?

When I contemplate these things, and advert to the source from whence they spring, I cannot suppress my apprehensions; when I behold the inventions and devices contrived to divest the chief magistrate of this republic of responsibility, and to invest his satellites with the mantle of infallibility, I confess I am alarmed lest respect for public station should stifle truth, and the fear of indecorum should outgrow liberty. The natural prin-

Peru; whilst others, forgetting the interests, the honour, and the tranquillity of their country, are roaming the seas in quest of unlawful booty.

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ciple of decay inherent in man and all his works, should warn the citizens of these states to watch over their constitution with unceasing vigilance, and regardless of persons or consequences, to repel the slightest encroachments on the palladium of freedom, for "the power of the executive will be increased exactly in proportion as that of the people is diminished;" and when casuistry is employed to explain constitutional points, by those who not long since found no difficulty in the interpretation, it is a bad omen of political stability.

The analogy in the general structure of the British government and the constitution of the United States, and the manners, habits, language, and religion of the people of the two countries, ought surely to save the child from the errors of the parent; yet with the vicious example of that government before our eyes, and the reprobation of her exactions and oppressions eternally on our tongues, we tread in her footsteps and pursue her policy. But whilst we are promoting a monied aristocracy, by which England has been overwhelmed in domestic calamities, and by pernicious institutions and a lavish misapplication of the public treasure, are extending the executive influence, the people of that country would retrace the ground over which we are *hurrying* headlong to destruction; as may be seen by the proceedings of their public assemblies and their recent publications, from one of which I will trespass on the reader the following extract, the application of which seems in point, particularly as respects our own enormous, useless, and expensive general staff:—

"A reformed parliament," says this writer, "would see no necessity of a commander in chief's office *with an enormous expensive staff;* they would see as *little* necessity for supporting, at an enormous expense, *academies* where the sons of borough voters and other protegés are educated (in some cases under foreign masters) in the art of war, and who are thus, *from their earliest youth, separated and kept as a distinct cast from the rest of the nation.* A reformed parliament, adopting the maxim of

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Blackstone, that all such establishments are abhorrent to the principles of the English constitution, would support no such thing; but would look upon the nation as most secure when under the protection of the arms of freemen."

What a biting reproach is here offered to the councils of the United States, and more especially their President Madison; may it prove a salutary warning to my country; may it rouse the original energies of the people, and recal the departing spirit of the constitution; for if such doctrines apply to the local and political circumstances of Great Britain, how much more applicable are they to those of this country; the former within arm's length of a great, powerful, and rival nation, called her natural enemy, the latter three thousand miles removed from every rival power; but because the neighbouring despots of Europe, whose estates join, and are ever engaged in controversies, find it political *in time of peace to prepare for war*, by building up to-day what was knocked down yesterday, or in this year to supply the place of mercenaries whose throats have been cut the last, we, blindly and falsely, apply the same reasoning to our own situation, and follow their example. It was said, and believed, when the independence of these states was declared, that "*a standing army in time of peace was utterly incompatible with the liberty of the subject;*" and I am certain we can discover nothing in the circumstances of France, after all her struggles for liberty, at this moment, or for twenty-five years past, to impair the force or justice of the observation—a military corps does not deserve the name, until the men cease to reason and are blindly obedient. Would the citizens of the United States deposit their liberties in the hands of those who, with equal indifference, contemn life or brave death; who, not being parties in framing the laws, are most ready to subvert them; who may defend society or destroy it, as interest and ambition may incline? No! although a soldier from early youth, and holding every honourable military man as a brother, I contend it were better the United States should run the hazard of

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suffering a year or two, in the commencement of every war, if wars they must have, until they can give form, consistency, and experience to their levies, than that they should permit institutions, which ever have been, and will ever continue to be dangerous to civil liberty.

Others recommended.

While I deplore the tendency of these measures, I cannot but think that some portion of the treasure proposed to be thus employed, would be more wisely appropriated to the erection of permanent defences, for the future security of the national archives, for the protection of the emporium* of the west, and to establish highways and canals, the only ligaments by which the integrity of the union can be perpetuated. Those legislators who are brought to believe, that by extending the patronage and prerogatives of the executive, they add strength to the government, are sadly deceived, for this is a government of will, not of power; of virtue, and not of force; an attempt to coerce the union will snap the cord which braces it; and then the people of these states, who are now and ought to continue the most happy on earth, may find cause to curse the day which dissevered the British empire. Long, oh! very long may it be, before this calamitous day shall arrive; and in the mean time, I most fervently thank the God of my salvation, that I should not in the ordinary course of things be destined to witness it.

Advice received from Messrs. Bayard and Gallatin of the enemy's intentions.

Craving pardon for this digression, I will resume my subject. It appears from the best information I have been able to obtain, that towards the end of June, 1814, President Madison had conceived the idea that the enemy might make the capital an object of attack, and that advice received from Messrs. Bayard and Gallatin the 26th of that month, confirmed his suspicions; in consequence of which, he, on the 1st of July, submitted to his cabinet a plan for immediately calling 2000 or 3000 men into the field, and holding ten or twelve thousand militia and volunteers, of the neighbouring states, in readiness to re-

Plan for calling out troops and militia.

* New Orleans.

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inforce that corps. It seems also that he suggested the plan of taking a position, somewhere between the Eastern Branch and the Patuxent, and that this proposition was not objected to. These facts are drawn from the report of the committee of congress, "*appointed to inquire into the causes and particulars of the invasion of the city of Washington*;" but there are abundant existing evidences, of applications made to the executive by individuals and by corporate bodies, as well posterior as anterior to this convention of the cabinet, on the subject of the defence of the city, to which no satisfactory answer could be obtained. I understand, that to the earnest inquiries of two gentlemen, of the first intelligence, respectability and fortune, in the district, after listening to the expression of their apprehensions, the Secretary of War laconically replied, "*I don't believe there is any danger*;" and I am informed from an authentic source, that, during the preceding season, a thousand citizens of Georgetown and the city determined to form a legion of volunteers, and petitioned the President to organise them, who authorised the choice of officers; but when the names were sent in, he refused to commission them, for what reason remains a secret; and thus President Madison prevented the establishment of a corps, which had actually been enrolled, officered, equipt, and, excepting the rifle companies, completely armed; and from my knowledge of characters, I may safely hazard the opinion, would have formed a nucleus, around which a competent force could have been promptly arrayed, to have made General Ross's advance a scene of blood, and compelled him to retrace his steps before he had reached Nottingham. Thus, it seems, that President Madison, under the guidance of his evil genius, would neither act himself nor suffer others to act.

Corps of volunteers offer their services, which are rejected by the President.

The constitution knows no such institution as a cabinet, no such officer as the head of a department. These are executive creations authorised by law for his convenience; he may call them ministers, counsellors, or clerks, and

Cabinet and heads of departments unknown to the consti-

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tution, mere creatures of the President's will.

may have them or not at his discretion; in the wide range of official dependents, *the necessary appendages of every government*, none are so prone to usurp power as those in conspicuous stations, *who are conscious they possess none* that is absolute and guaranteed by law; such is the true standing of the gentlemen who compose what is called the cabinet council of the President, and therefore they cannot be too cautiously regarded; lest, from the humble amanuensis of the executive, the mere organs of his will, and dependents on his pleasure, by making themselves first convenient, and then necessary to the legislature, they should by insensible but incessant encroachments, get possession of the reins of the government, and under the sanction of their master, dictate to the correlative branches. But whatever may be the relation, President Madison has found it convenient to establish, between himself and his ministers; whatever the unconstitutional power* he has ventured to vest in them, he cannot change their respective official relations, because he is himself solely responsible to the people, and his ministers, the creatures of his will, are responsible to him only. With these convictions on my judgment, which have been uniform from the origin of the government, however the flatterers of the palace or the advocates of undefined ministerial prerogatives, may concede to the assumptions of those presidential counsellors, I shall never consent to ascribe to the executive magistrate of these states, that attribute of royalty which would exempt him from error, and exonerate him from the malversation and neglect of his dependents; and therefore when speaking of the scenes which passed immediately under the eye of President Madison, I shall

President responsible for the acts of the government, not his ministers.

* Never before his miserable administration, did a Secretary of War dare to disgrace the profession of arms, by arrogating to himself and exercising the functions of military command. I remember when a little gentleman occupied that station, he ventured to propose to an officer "*the inspection of his garrisons*;" who replied to him, "*it would be indispensable to this end, that he should be clothed with the commission of a Major-general.*"

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consider Secretary Armstrong a mere instrument, and shall hold the President responsible for his conduct in office; I believe this to be the legitimate construction, and am satisfied it is the safe and sound interpretation; for I recollect well when I resumed the sword in 1791, at the time General Washington *administered the government* which Mr. Madison has *abused*, General Knox, then Secretary of War, on opening his correspondence with me, premised, that what he might write in his official capacity, must be considered as from the President of the United States; and he scarcely ever omitted in his correspondence, to quote the authority of the chief magistrate, as is uniformly observed by the ministers of Great Britain to this day, although they stand personally responsible to their country, for the due administration of their respective official trusts. Indeed our own ministers sometimes employ the Presidential authority, as will be seen in the order which sanctioned the murder of Helms; but in general, and almost universally, our official lordlings, and more especially the Secretaries of War, employ the first person in an *imperative* tone, offensive to the *feelings of a gentleman*, and betraying, at the same time, their *ignorance of the essential attributes of that character.*

10th military district created.

It appears, that the day after the cabinet council, the 2d of July, the President judged it expedient to create a 10th military district, although his Secretary of War had just before discovered, and had apprised General Izard, that "*territorial limits of command are found inconvenient;*" yet, notwithstanding the inconvenience, it was now deemed a *salutary precaution* to put up a barrier not to save the capital, but eventually to screen the President and his coadjutor; a district was accordingly created to comprehend the whole state of Maryland, the district of Columbia, and that part of Virginia north of the Rappahannoc river, embracing an exposed coast of 800 or 1000 miles, vulnerable at every point, and intersected by many large rivers, and by Chesapeake bay. For an individual to have done justice to such an exten-

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sive command, or to have administered it with effect in the face of an enemy, would have required more than mortal powers.* No matter! a district was a district, and there were no judges to decide on, or to question its aptitude to the command of an individual. No. 10 was accordingly created, and Brigadier-general Winder, a native of Maryland, whose respectable relation, a meritorious officer of the revolution, administered the government of the state, was selected by the President for the command the same day, though it seems it was not until the 6th he received official advice of the appointment, which, as he stood at the head of the general staff, he could have consistently declined; and if he had possessed more experience he would have done so, because there was not a shadow of defensive preparation, and the attack of the enemy might be daily expected; but professional ambition, zeal for the service, and a thirst for fame, will always prevail over sober reflection; indeed it is rare to find a soldier of pride and spirit, such as General Winder is allowed to be, who weighs and balances causes and effects in the scales of discretion; such phlegm does not comport with the enterprise of the youthful chief; deliberation is the province of the veteran, who content to do his duty, seeks not adventures; and yet I speak from sad conviction, when I say, the most experienced may sometimes be beguiled by fair prospects and ministerial promises.

and General Winder appointed to the command.

Finds the district destitute of munitions of war and troops.

General Winder *accepted the command without means and without time to create them; he found the district*

* It is true, that after the retreat of General Armstrong, President Madison, with the counsel of his successor, to improve on past folly, annexed the command of district No. 4 to that of No. 10; but this was merely to swell the self-importance of General Scott, who, I am informed, was intended for Secretary of War; and himself avowed to a young lady, *whose fortune he was seeking*, that he should be the *commander in chief*, and could make *those people at Washington* do what he pleased; therefore *her head quarters* should be at New York, or Philadelphia, or both at her discretion; indeed if she had peculiar attachments to Baltimore, *her quarters* should be established there.

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without magazines of provisions or forage, without transport tools or implements, without a commissariat or efficient quarter-master's department, without a general staff, and finally without troops. It is true, that the President, on the 4th of July, "*pro formâ,*" and in commemoration of the day, did make a requisition to the several states for 93,500 militia that had been authorised by law, in which he designated their respective quota, and requested the executive magistrates of each state *to detach and hold them in readiness for immediate service.* Of this requisition, 2000 effectives from the state of Virginia; 5000 from Pennsylvania; 6000 from Maryland; and 2000 from the district of Columbia; making in the aggregate 15,000* men *on paper,* which were "*to be organised and equipped, and held in readiness for future service,* within their respective states, *until the 10th district should be actually invaded, or menaced with invasion,* when General Winder was authorised, and of course not before, "*to call for a part or for the whole of the quota assigned to the state of Maryland, which shall have been organised and equipped under the aforesaid requisition;*" and he is warned very gravely to be careful to avoid all unnecessary calls; "*to proportion the call to the exigency.*" In this place then, it is necessary to remark, that the requisition was a mere matter of form, and incapable of producing the end it affected to embrace; in each state the militia was first *to be organized and equipt in the manner prescribed by the requisition,* and yet in those states *there existed no power so to organize and equip in such form,* and until such *special*

Militia requisition for 93,500 men.

Requisition so worded as to defeat the remedy it pretended to prescribe.

* It is painful to reflect on the proceedings of a committee of congress appointed to inquire and report on matters of fact, to the popular branch of the government; because, independent of the obligations of an oath, local, national, and personal character, are all interested in the candour and integrity of their proceedings. When the legislators of a free people suffer themselves to be employed as the instruments of faction, to gloss folly, to conceal disgrace, or persecute innocence, they dishonour themselves and disgrace their country; yet the committee appointed to inquire into "*the causes, &c. of the invasion of the city of Washington,*" have declared that the 15,000 men "*were put at the disposition of the commanding General.*"

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organization and equipment had taken place, *the call was not to be made;* but when the exigency arises, the General is to proportion his call to the occasion; and instead of being authorised to have at all times a proportion of at least two-thirds of the given number of militia, trained to military duties in a camp of observation and exercise, to await the expected exigency, around which the remainder might rally; he is, when danger stares him in the face, to the utter neglect of the many important duties pressing on him, obliged to devote his time to the collection and formation of a body of raw yeomanry; and is himself trammelled with restrictions, and left with scarcely more discretion than the corporal of a picket guard.

But in making this requisition, President Madison appears to have been alarmed, lest he should have done too much, and in recommending depots of arms and equipments, he seems to have forgotten that *subsistence* was an indispensable article of the munitions of war; that *transport* was necessary to convey his baggage; and that *entrenching tools and axes* might be useful, in breaking up and obstructing roads, or to fortify his camps; and to put it out of General Winder's power to burthen the public with the expense of a competent force for the defence of the capital, he informs him, through his Secretary of War, on the 17th July, two days after he had received advice of the arrival of Admiral Cochrane's van at Lynnhaven bay with a heavy reinforcement, that "*the militia of the district of Columbia, amounting to about* 2000, *is kept in a disposable state, and subject to your orders; I have also to express the wishes of the President, that not less than two, nor more than three thousand of the new drafts, under the requisition of the 4th July, be organized, embodied, and encamped at some middle point between Baltimore and this city.*" How inconsistent was this conduct of President Madison. The enemy had been reconnoitring the Potowmack and the Patuxent since the beginning of May; no doubt remained of their designs against the capital, which were admitted by himself, and

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under the impression, he calls on the respective states for the immediate organization and equipment of their respective quota of 93,500 militia, 15,000 of whom he designates for the defence of the metropolis, but directs them to be held in "*readiness for future service.*"* This was doing with one hand and undoing with the other; it was blowing hot and cold in the same breath; it followed that General Winder must, necessarily, have been perplexed and embarrassed, by the restrictions which fettered him; and the manifold contingencies on which his operations were made to depend, would have rendered abortive the most judicious plans. He duly appreciated the enemy, had formed a clear and correct judgment of the advantages which favoured their attack, and as clearly anticipated the disadvantages under which we should labour, if the militia force which formed his chief dependence, was not seasonably organized and arrayed; he foresaw the evil, and with great perspicuity proposed the remedy;† but his letter was treated with silent contempt; yet he was harassed by orders, admonitions, ministerial interference, and Presidential reviews, which seem to have staggered his self-confidence, and impaired his reliance on his own judgment and resource; which will ever be the case in military operations, whilst every movement of the General is superintended and liable to be controuled by superior authority.‡ It would therefore be as unjust to hold General Winder responsible for the military operations which preceded the affair of Bladensburgh, as to condemn him for the unfortunate issue of that affair, and the disgraceful sacrifice of the national capital, which belongs exclusively to President Madison, and will never be forgotten while Washington continues to be the seat of government of the United States.

The embarrassment with which General Winder was surrounded.

Proposes a remedy, but receives no answer to his application.

* See the letter of the Secretary of War to General Winder, July 12.

† See Appendix, No. XVIII.

‡ President Madison meant to improve on the Aulic council.

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President Madison's conduct inconsistent with his information.

From the conduct of the President, it was not suspected he had the remotest idea of the attack of the enemy upon the capital, much less that he had received an intimation of such design from our commissioners in Europe, Messrs. Bayard and Gallatin. It was believed that his judgment was regulated by the opinion of General Armstrong, who, it was well known, treated every suggestion of danger with ridicule,* until the enemy were discovered in full march from Upper Marlborough. The discovery proves that the President sinned with his eyes open, and neglected to employ the ample means in his power, to avert the calamity which he expected; this aggravates his offence against his country, and gives him an indefeasible claim to the reprobation of posterity.

The unfortunate apprehensions which prevailed, helped no doubt to distract our inadequate means; for while some believed that Baltimore or Annapolis, as points of attack, would be preferred to the seat of empire, others were of opinion that the enemy would land at South River and march across the country to Washington, without reflecting that by this route they would put themselves in air, and expose their right flank and rear to the population of the city of Baltimore, and the populous counties of Montgomery, Frederic, and Baltimore, leaving their water transport far behind them; whereas, by ascending the Patuxent, their right flank would be covered, and their left exposed to a puny population, whilst they could avail themselves of their water craft, in advancing and retreating, to a point within twenty miles of the object of attack.

But such had been the remissness of the executive for the past year, notwithstanding the warning of Admiral Warren, which had been so frequently repeated by Ad-

* When Colonel Minor applied the evening of the 23d of August, for arms for 600 Virginia volunteers, the Secretary observed it would be time enough in the morning; but being pressed for the delivery by the Mayor, who introduced the Colonel, he with an horrible smile replied, "Doctor, you are more frightened than hurt."

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miral Cockburn, that Fort Washington, the only water defence of the district of Columbia, as late as the 25th of July 1814, exactly thirty days before the capital was burnt, was in a bad condition for offence or defence in many respects, but particularly for the want of ammunition, there not being on that day "*a single pound for five excellent long* 18-*pounders mounted on the water battery.*"* Apathy, indifference, and a blind confidence, marked President Madison's conduct, until the enemy was at the threshold; yet from the singular nature† of the country, the capital might have been saved by the instrumentality of axes and spades, supported by two hundred mounted riflemen, an hundred dragoons, and four pieces of horse artillery only; but such was the distraction, the irresolution, and imbecility which ensued the landing of the enemy, and such had been the unpardonable improvidence before, that not a single bridge was broken, not a causeway destroyed, not an inundation attempted, not a tree fallen, not a rood of the road obstructed, nor a gun fired at the enemy, in a march of near forty miles, from Benedict to Upper Marlborough, by a route on which there are ten or a dozen difficult defiles; which, with a few hours labour, six pieces of light artillery, 300 infantry, 200 riflemen, and 60 dragoons, might have been defended against any force that could approach them; such is the narrowness of the road, the profundity of the ravines, the steepness of the acclivities, and the sharpness of the ridges.

Bad condition of the defences, and want of ammunition.

Distraction which ensued the landing of the enemy.

If Mr. Madison had been a provident magistrate, if he had possessed that love for his country which real patriotism inspires, or if he had even respected his own fame, expecting, as he acknowledged he did, that the enemy meditated an attack against the national capital,

The line of conduct President Madison ought to have pursued.

* See the report of the committee of congress, pages 23—24.

† See the map on which General Ross's route is laid down; compare it with General Ross's, and Admirals Cockburn and Cochrane's despatches, and bear in mind that every creek in this route *formed a difficult and dangerous defile.*

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especially confided to his charge, it became his solemn duty to gird on his sword, take the field, and rally his countrymen around him; the direct invasion of the seat of government is perhaps the single case, which could warrant the President of the United States in entering upon the exercise of his military functions; if President Madison had pitched his tent, even at the late hour when he received advice of the arrival of the van of Admiral Cochrane in the Chesapeake, on the 15th July, and had avowed his determination to defend the capital of his country to the last extremity, and proclaimed that armed volunteers would be acceptable, he would have been encircled by the best blood of the country, within 300 miles of him; and, if he could have summoned up resolution *not to have run away at the very first shot*, the contest of a single hour would have compelled, the rash and indiscreet, General Ross to have laid down his arms, and President Madison would have immortalised his name, by leading the vanquished foe in triumph through that metropolis, the destruction of which he had meditated. Alas! what a melancholy contrast do we behold in the President's conduct and the consequent catastrophe.

Being interdicted the use of my sword, I had left the city of Washington for the summer; but a domestic misfortune carried me back in the beginning of August, and I found every thing quiet in respect to the defence of the place. On the 18th of the month, observing the parade of several volunteer companies of the city and Georgetown, I inquired the cause, and was informed advice had reached the city of the approach of the enemy by the Patuxent. On the evening of the same day I received a note from Colonel Monroe, advising me that the menacing movements of the enemy up the bay had determined him to reconnoitre them, for which purpose he intended leaving the city the next morning. I had before been apprised of the arrival of Admiral Cochrane in the Chesapeake, and the increase of the enemy's shipping, and made no doubt the attack I had long expected was now to be carried into execution. I could not discover

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that any precautions had been taken to obstruct the march of the enemy, and I knew that no efficient preparations had been made to resist them. I was at this time quartered with a revolutionary officer,* who had spilt his blood in the cause of his country, and he will recollect my solicitude for the safety of the city, my ideas of the route by which the enemy would approach it, and the best mode of resisting them; I felt most sensibly for my country, and with agony of mind, in my answer to Colonel Monroe's note, proposed, *that could my arrest be suspended, and my sword restored for a short period, I would take the command of the militia, and save the city or forfeit my life.* This was a proffer of dire responsibility at so late an hour; but I preferred death to inaction at such a crisis, and did believe, that by covering the roads in front of the enemy with working parties, to obstruct them by all practicable means, and at the same time falling on their rear by the new road to Zakiah swamp, or that by St. Paul's church, with Peter's artillery, Stull's, Davidson's, and Dougherty's riflemen and infantry, and fifty dragoons; whilst simultaneous attacks were made on his front and left flank, at every exposed point or difficult defile, by flying parties of four or five hundred infantry, so stationed as to relieve each other as the enemy advanced. I repeat! it was then, and is still my opinion, that by such attacks, judiciously conducted and vigorously pushed, if the enemy had not retraced their steps, they would have crossed the Patuxent at Nottingham or Pig Point, and returned to their shipping; or if they had persevered in their march against the capital, their boats might have been destroyed, and their retreat cut off, or rendered a scene of carnage. To have assured this issue, it was only necessary to post the Baltimore troops and the corps from Annapolis at some convenient point, on the route between Queen Ann and the Governor's Bridge, with orders to push heavy parties of observation to the verge of

Wilkinson proposes to Colonel Monroe to suspend his arrest, and offers to save the city.

His plan of annoyance and defence.

* Captain W. O'Neil.

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the enemy's camp in Marlborough, and to hold themselves in readiness to harass their rear in whatever direction they might march; and here it may be proper to remark, that the maxim, "*he who divides his force will be beaten in detail*," must be received with qualification, as the art of war depends on an infinity of unforeseen contingencies, and therefore is not reducible to specific rules: it will apply to armies nearly on an equality, which are manœuvring for advantages, but never to an inferior force, which, though competent to harass its adversary, dare not hazard a general engagement. But President Madison preferred to signalise himself in a pitched battle, and as he scorned the idea of taking any advantage of his antagonist, he permitted him an undisturbed march to the theatre of combat.

Wilkinson not receiving an answer to his note, leaves Washington.

Having received no reply to my note to Colonel Monroe, I left the metropolis on the 20th, being persuaded President Madison would have hazarded the burning up of the whole district, sooner than discompose the *harmony of the cabinet*, by giving offence to Secretary Armstrong. I am indeed shocked when I take a retrospect of the evidences which fell under my observation at that time, of the terror in which that minister kept more than one great man at Washington; for I would sooner cease to exist, than live in fear of an equal. Sick and disgusted, I retired to the mountains for the restoration of my health, and therefore the sequel of this narrative rests upon the information of military men, actually engaged in the scenes which occupy my pen, in whose candour I repose the highest confidence.

Inefficient equipment of the militia.

The corps of district militia, paraded at Washington on the 18th, was a part of *the* 2000 *kept in a disposable state and subject to General Winder's orders*, as the President informed him by his regular organ the 17th July; yet this part of the corps not exceeding 1200 rank and file, was still unorganised, and Stull's company of riflemen actually unarmed; these men had been regularly drilled to this arm, and they were expert in the use of it;

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yet neither the application of the Captain, nor that of the General himself, could prevail on the executive to indulge their wishes for their favourite weapon,* and that company marched against the enemy without arms, late in the afternoon of the 20th. General Winder's situation at this moment, was more than enough to have embarrassed an officer of forty campaigns, and it was his fortune to have served but two. With a respectable column of veteran troops approaching him, under the conduct of an able General, and commanded by experienced officers, General Winder should have been prepared to mount his horse, draw his sword, and advance upon the invaders in such force as would have assured victory. If any part of my gallant, native state, were disaffected, which I will not admit, 20,000 of the ardent patriotic sons of Virginia, at the word of their chief magistrate, would have rallied around the capital of their country; why the precaution was not taken, President Madison should have answered to that outraged country; instead of which, he was sheltered from public reprobation, by an elaborate, incorrect, and uncandid congressional report. But what was the General's actual situation? The intrepid foe was advancing upon him within three days march, when he found himself without men or means; without an efficient commissariat quarter-master's department or general staff; without depots of provisions or of forage, or axes or intrenching tools, or even flints; he had an army to levy, and form, and array, from the unorganized yeomanry of the country, scattered over hundreds and hundreds of miles. Thus circumstanced, he had neither time for deliberation, nor means for operation; and should this officer be held responsible for consequences? Forbid it justice! No! James Madison, the unworthy President of the United States, was the cause of the dishonour of his country, in the conflagration of its capital.

Perplexities of General Winder's situation, and the paucity of his means.

* It seems President Madison preferred to have the arms destroyed by the enemy, sooner than employ them for their destruction.

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His contempt of the salutary admonition contained in General Winder's letter of the 9th July, and various other applications from different quarters, and the trammels he imposed on that officer, were sufficient to discourage defence; but his puny, undecisive, abortive proposition of the 17th July, for "imbodying and encamping at some middle point between Baltimore and the city, a force not less than 2000, nor more than 3000 men," from a levy depending on vague contingencies, capped the climax of imbecility, and produced the desperate state of things which sealed the triumph of the enemy.

Movement of the force from the city, and of the enemy from Benedict.

From the disorganized and ill-provided condition in which they were found, the troops from *the city, that disposable force held in readiness under the President's eye for General Winder's orders*, could not be put in motion until the 20th of August in the afternoon; they crossed the Eastern Branch, advanced a few miles, and encamped. The enemy had marched the same day from Benedict, taking the river road, as will be seen by reference to the map, and having passed the difficult defile of Swanson's creek, they also encamped. On the 21st, in the morning, the volunteers from the city were organized into a regiment, and Captain Stull received muskets instead of rifles; but the troops were obliged to wait until near noon for their baggage and provisions; they then proceeded, and in the evening reached the wood-yard, where they halted for the night, and the next morning found themselves in want of subsistance. The enemy, in the mean time, had advanced to Nottingham without molestation, where they met their flotilla under Admiral Cockburn, and again encamped.

Transactions of the 22d of August.

On the morning of the 22d, the cavalry of Laval and Tilghman, say 200 men, with the regular troops under lieutenant-colonel Scott, about 400 strong, were ordered to advance towards Nottingham, and reached Oden's house, where they were soon followed by Major Peter, with six 6-pounders flying artillery, and a detachment of about 250 select men. General Ross marched from Nottingham the same morning by the Chapel road leading to Marl-

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borough, and on discovering the American troops, made a detachment to his left to meet them, which advanced to the foot of the hill near Oden's house, when the American troops fell back, and the enemy resumed their march. This was the first occasion which presented for a collision of arms, and General Winder was present with the American troops; but if a fault was then committed, he should not be held responsible, because he was attended by a minister of the cabinet, an older soldier, by whose advice he was doubtless influenced; nor is he to be blamed for falling back on the approach of the enemy, because it was not his policy to indulge the British commander in a general action which he sought; indeed that was the last great error of President Madison. But General Winder should, in my judgment, have ordered his main body, then commanded by General Smith of the district of Columbia, which was under arms near the wood-yard ready for combat, to have gained the heights on the left of Charles's creek, and as soon as the enemy had resumed their march and passed Oden's, he should have followed them and fallen on their rear at the time General Smith engaged their front, or when their centre had passed the creek; but the enemy gave him a more favourable opportunity, by turning to their right soon after they had passed Bishop Claggett's, in order to communicate with the flotilla at Mount Calvert, on a road so flanked by hills and ravines, that by a vigorous attack their rear might have been broken and cut up, before they could have made front to support it; pent up in such narrow difficult grounds, and pressed in front and rear, the effect of General Ross's discipline and numbers would have been impaired, and he must have been crippled before he could have extricated himself, whilst the American corps, with the country open behind them, could have withdrawn at discretion; and although the enemy might have gained Upper Marlborough, it would have terminated their advance; this is speculation, but whatever may be its merits, I know the corps of Scott and Peters panted for action, and they should have been

Conduct General Winder should have pursued.

Its probable effects on General Ross.

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indulged; in such circumstances, blood judiciously expended excites emulation and inspires courage.

Winder falls back on his main body and Ross proceeds to Upper Marlborough. Barney's flotilla blown up.

But General Winder fell back on his main body near the wood-yard, from whence he retired to encamp at the long Old Fields, and, like all retrograde movements in the face of an enemy, this disheartened his men and officers. General Ross, after his interview with Admiral Cockburn near Mount Pleasant, proceeded leisurely to Upper Marlborough, where he the same day pitched his camp; and Cockburn, with his barges, pursued Barney's flotilla, which had, by order of President Madison, been unfortunately abandoned, and was without resistance blown up, when it will be apparent to every competent judge, that, from the narrowness of the channel, the Commodore could have defended himself, and repulsed any floating force the enemy could have brought against him, and his flanks were well secured by the extent of the marshes on both sides of the river. Thus the primary object* of the enemy would have been baffled, and the meritorious services of the Commodore and his gallant crew would have been enhanced; but, as if the curse of heaven accompanied the authority of President Madison, his orders and arrangements blighted every hope and blasted every expectation.

Barney with his men join the army.

Commodore Barney, with the men of his flotilla, who had been so unfortunately called from their proper element to a service of which they had little understanding, joined the troops at the long Old Fields on the 22d, which augmented the extraordinary *melange* encamped at that place to about 3200 men; and with this disorganized body General Winder rashly kept his position during the night, within eight miles of four or five thousand veteran troops, who ought to have marched upon and routed him. The following account from an officer who passed the

* It appears from the correspondence of General Ross and Admirals Cochrane and Cockburn, that the attack of Washington formed a secondary consideration, and was referred to contingencies at the time the armament moved from Benedict. See Appendix, No. XIX.

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night at the Old Fields the 22d August, will give some idea of the laxity of discipline, and the disorder which will ever attend such heterogeneous assemblages of armed and unarmed citizens: "The camp was as open all night as a race field, and the sailors and militia were as noisy as if at a fair; you might hear the countersign fifty yards when a sentry challenged; I made up my mind that if Ross, whose camp I had reconnoitred in the evening, was a man of enterprise, he would be upon us in the course of the night; and being determined to die like a trooper's horse, I slept with my shoes on; but I was deceived, and about one o'clock Secretary Jones and Mr. Rush called on General Winder, and informed him the President was in the neighbourhood, in consequence of which a body guard of a company of regulars were ordered to the President's quarters. About two o'clock, Mr. Loughborough, at the head of thirteen volunteers, came to the General's quarters on horseback; they were equipped, and offered their services.

Description of the American camp on the night of the 22d.

General Stansbury's brigade of Baltimore militia had reached Bladensburgh the evening before; the distinguished revolutionary veteran Colonel Beall, with a body of militia from Annapolis; and the 5th regiment of Baltimore volunteers, with a party of riflemen, were under march for the same place. In this situation of his corps, President Madison joined his main body at the long Old Fields, with his suite, excepting Colonel Monroe, who was performing active service on scout, and I understand had been very nearly made prisoner the evening before at Nottingham. The troops were turned out on the morning of the 23d, and reviewed by their commander in chief, whose martial appearance gladdened every countenance and encouraged every heart; on seeing the President before them, the trust attached to exalted stations inspired the troops with confidence; looking up to him as the fountain of wisdom and intelligence, the source of judgment and discretion, the idea of fighting under his orders dissipated every apprehension; *for when the so-*

President Madison reviews his army.

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vereign exposes his person, who is there so base as not to court danger.

Admiral Cockburn's correspondence referred to.

It appears from Admiral Cockburn's letter of the 27th August, to Admiral Cochrane, that he went the morning of the 23d August from Mount Calvert to Marlborough, to confer with General Ross, with respect to ulterior operations, that they promptly determined to march against Washington, and agreed that the army should advance, and the sailors and marine artillery, then at Pig Point, should be ordered forward, to join them at the encampment of the night; the marines of the ships to be left at Marlborough for the protection of their sick, lame, provision and water craft. In consequence of this resolution, General Ross moved five miles out of Marlborough, on the road to the long Old Field, and encamped, no doubt to give time for the sailors and marine artillery to get up, and to see what effect his movement would produce on the American army. Major Peter, with his detachment, had been sent out, after the review of the commander in chief in the morning, to feel the enemy at Marlborough; he met their advanced guard a mile or two from that place, skirmished with it, and, without consequences, fell back to the Old Fields. The commander in chief and his suite remained in camp with the troops until evening, in the expectation of an action, with which he would doubtless have been gratified, but for the reasons before stated. It appears that in the course of the day, the commander expressed a desire for a speedy concentration of his forces, and that General Winder endeavoured to give effect to the proposition; from this disposition it seems manifest, that President Madison sought a general action, certainly not because the chances of a favourable result were on the side of the American corps, composed as it was of soldiers, sailors, marines, drafted militia, and volunteers, men and officers perfect strangers to each other, in general raw and undisciplined, and who had never trod a field of battle, or looked an enemy in the face; would such a mass, hurried and hud-

General Ross moves five miles out of Marlborough and encamps.

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dled together, without preconcert or arrangement, have been able to combat, with effect, a superior force of veterans led by able and experienced officers? Military men will answer in the negative. But the President too late perceived, that he had by his improvidence and neglect committed the capital of his country, and, like a desperate gambler, determined to hazard all on a single throw; he therefore proposed to commit his fellow citizens to an unequal conflict, *regardless of their lives*, and to trust to accident or good fortune for the preservation of the metropolis and his own honour. I can no otherwise account for his proposition to concentrate his force at the long Old Fields, and receive the enemy on a plain; for, with the addition of General Stansbury's brigade, he could not have fought more than 4500 men of all arms, as the 5th regiment of Baltimore volunteers, and the militia from Annapolis, could not have got up in season. But, if instead of this vain idea of concentration, General Winder's plan of menacing the enemy's left flank had been pushed a little further, General Ross would inevitably have been obliged to retrograde, the corps at the Old Fields might then have harassed his rear, and it requires little penetration to discern what would have been the consequence.

President Madison concentrates his force, and determines on a general action.

General Winder's plan of operations considered.

A different course was pursued, the commander in chief retired to his palace, and the troops very judiciously broke up their camp at the Old Fields, and followed him across the Eastern Branch, orders having been previously transmitted to Stansbury, Beall, and the 5th regiment of Baltimore volunteers, to take post near Bladensburgh. It has been brought as a charge against General Winder, and the military committee appointed to gloss over the conduct of President Madison, and screen him from public condemnation, have deemed it worthy of notice, that the march from the Old Fields was somewhat hurried and disorderly, as if it were possible to conduct the retreat of a body of irregulars, under cover of the night, with regularity and order; surely the honourable chair-

The President retires and the troops follow him.

The disorderly retreat from the

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man of that committee must have known that his own gallant volunteers, the meritorious conquerors of *Tecumseh*, did not at all times, even in day-light, keep their ranks dressed with precision, or their files closed to regular distance; indeed, considering the mockery of the Presidential pageant and other circumstances, it is matter of wonder that the General should be able to keep the men together *in any order*.

Old Fields accounted for.

Ross's intention of attacking the American camp.

But next to a *general action* or a *continued flight*, these were the very movements the British General most desired; they consummated his wishes and removed all anxiety, by putting his rear and flanks in safety, and, placing the whole force of his adversary in his front; I am well assured by the inhabitants that General Ross's patroles were, before midnight, on the ground which had been abandoned by the American troops, and that it was his intention to have attacked them before day, if they had continued stationary; be this as it may, he certainly understood the nature of the ground General Winder occupied, and the order of his encampment, which was readily procured by spies. I understand the intercourse between the hostile camps, at only eight miles distance, could not be so strictly restrained as it ought to have been; one of these wretches, a native resident near Marlborough, was apprehended in the camp, while the commander in chief was in the act of reviewing his troops; he was committed for trial, and it is generally believed would have been convicted, if President Madison had not interposed a *noli prosequi*, to rescue him from the justice of his country.

Disposition of the American troops on the night of the 23d.

The best information I have been able to procure, gives the following disposition to the adverse troops during the night of the 23d August.* The main body of the American army in the city near the lower bridge of the Eastern Branch; Stansbury's brigade of militia, the 5th regiment of Baltimore volunteers, about 100 riflemen, and two companies of artillery from the same place near Bladens-

* See Atlas, No. XVI.

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burgh; Colonel Beall, with a regiment of militia, was at an undefined point in the neighbourhood of the Western Branch of the Patuxent, supposed to be nearly equidistant from Marlborough and Bladensburgh, and not nearer than nine miles to either. The British army occupied their camp near the long Old Fields, two hundred *ship marines* under command of Captain Robyns, were stationed at Marlborough, and their water craft was left at Mount Calvert. There can be no doubt this was an injudicious disposition of the American forces; but is General Winder to be condemned for it? I think not; because President Madison, by urging a concentration of his corps, when so recently in camp, at the long Old Fields, had clearly indicated his determination to try the issue of a general action, and the General appears to have exerted every nerve to give effect to his plan; in circumstances at once perplexing and equivocal, none but a soldier habituated to subordination, can feel the influence of an intimation from a superior, or interpret the force of his opinion. The proximity of the enemy and the position of the American troops, forbade the seasonable concentration at the long Old Fields; yet the views of the President were not to be abandoned, and General Winder fell back within five miles of the point, where the auxiliary corps had been ordered to rendezvous. I place myself in General Winder's situation, and reason from what would have been my own decisions in a similar case. But if I had commanded at the Old Fields, with liberty to exercise my own judgment, I should have offered the enemy a free passage to the city, instead of attempting to oppose him in a pitched battle, with a body of citizens, without organization or discipline, nine tenths of whom had never seen a priming burnt in hostility, and the whole of them strangers to an order of battle; and hazarding every thing on my own discretion, I should have preferred the very judicious design of General Winder, proposed for the corps of Stansbury, Beall and Sterrett, with orders to those officers to precipitate themselves upon Marlborough, cut up the marines, and destroy the

General Winder's design approved.

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stores at that place at day-break the 24th, and to press forward at the same time an elite party, with a few field pieces, to capture or sink the water craft at Mount Calvert. Having confided these arrangements to the execution of able and intelligent officers, as soon as night-fall, I would have cleared the vicinity of my camp of all observers, and pushed a heavy picket of observation, with alert patroles, to the verge of the enemy's position; I should then have silently drawn off upon the road towards Alexandria, until I fell in with that which leads directly to Upper Marlborough, and, with the necessary precautions to prevent surprise, my men should there have reposed on their arms. Without other provisions but what they carried on their backs, and without resource but in their depot at Marlborough, and their water craft at Mount Calvert, independent of the apprehensions excited by this *ruse de guerre*, the attack of General Stansbury would have been the signal for General Ross to fall back, and I should have accompanied him; while our corps at Marlborough, having done their business at that place, would have retired, obstructing the roads, and taken possession of those difficult heights on the right of Charles's creek, to oppose and harass the British General in front, whilst the main body pressed his rear, and the effect would have been to cripple and disgrace him *at least*.

Other operations recommended, and their evident consequences.

But I will suppose the attack on General Ross's rear at Marlborough had failed to induce him to retrograde, and that he had pressed forward for the city; fifty dragoons with their regimental axes, would have sufficed to obstruct the bridges in season; the corps at Marlborough could have closed in on his right flank, and the main body would have found him so much employ in rear, as to prevent his front from progressing rapidly, and the longer he persevered, the more desperate would have become his condition. In fine, it would have been more honourable to have harassed him into the city, than to fly before him; and if he had entered it under such circumstances, the whole country would have been up in

The policy of hanging on the enemy as he entered the capital.

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arms against him, and he would never have got back to his shipping.

But the morning of the fatal 24th arrived, and we find President Madison and his cabinet surveying the lower bridge of the Eastern Branch, half a mile long, with the main body of the army arrayed for its defence. I have never been able to account for the infatuation, which could have produced the apprehension, that the enemy would attempt the city by that route; for if a plank had not been removed, this bridge would have been found more difficult than that of LODI; because it could have been enfiladed by the perpendicular fire of a triple range of heavy cannon, and by cross fires from above and below it, and it could also have been flanked by an armed schooner and a sloop of war lying in the stream; besides it had a draw near the western end, which, when raised, would have formed an impassable barrier, and if pierced with a double range of loop holes, would have furnished a safe cover for the destructive fire of musketry, to which that of two or three thousand infantry, from the shore and the bank, could have been added; but if we abstract every species of missile weapon, this defile could have been effectually obstructed, by half a dozen axemen in an hour, or by a single individual with a few barrels of powder in five minutes. To suppose that an experienced officer with an accurate map* of the country before him, and a knowledge of the obstacles which might be opposed to his march, should without artillery attempt the passage of a defile thus susceptible of defence, betrayed an excess of folly bordering on insanity.

The folly of expecting the enemy by the lower bridge, and the facility of defending it demonstrated.

Yet notwithstanding the glaring impossibility of passing the Eastern Branch by this bridge, the sapient President Madison, and the sage instructor of young generals, after the most grave scrutiny of all circumstances, were profoundly impressed with the opinion, that the British General would certainly make his attempt against the capital by

* See Admiral Cochrane's Letter, Appendix, No. XIX.

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Letter of an officer of intelligence quoted.

that route; and to put this fact beyond doubt, I will quote an extract from a letter of an officer of character, rank and intelligence, at that time in the service: "During the morning of the 24th," says he, "I was repeatedly in the tent of General Winder, near the lower bridge on the Eastern Branch, where I found the President, the Secretaries of War and the Navy, and the Attorney-general assembled, to deliberate on the state of things, and aid the General with their counsel. Of this I was ignorant at the time, and observing no privacy in their deliberations, the interest I took in the public welfare, prompted me to obtrude some of my own ideas, more especially as a palpably erroneous opinion appeared to prevail, that the enemy would approach by that bridge, and that the troops ought therefore to be detained where they were to defend it. I felt anxious they should move to Bladensburgh early, and unite with the militia which had arrived from Baltimore, because it would require a great deal of time to post the men advantageously, and to communicate the orders and instructions how to act, according to the various chances and events of battle. It seemed mere folly to expect the enemy by the way of the bridge, where a dozen men, with half an hour's notice, by destroying it might arrest their progress. *General Armstrong suggested they might lay a bridge of pontoons; I answered, it was impossible; to which he replied with a sneer,* that *the word impossible was not to be found in the military vocabulary.* The *mere belief* that an army, certainly short of 7 or 8000 men, destitute as we knew them to be of horses to transport their artillery and baggage, could notwithstanding contrive to carry an equipage of pontoons, sufficient for laying a bridge across a river, near half a mile wide, demonstrated that General Armstrong's knowledge of pontoon bridges extended not much beyond the name.

"The conversation at General Winder's quarters during the morning was rather desultory; *first one suggestion was made and commented on, and then another; no idea seemed to be entertained that it was necessary to come*

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instantly to a decision how we should act, and to set immediately about it, when I mentioned the certainty of the enemy approaching by the route of Bladensburgh, in preference to the bridge, and the expediency of taking post there without any further delay. I observed my opinion to produce some effect on the mind of the President; by the others it was not much regarded.

"To hasten the movement to Bladensburgh, I was willing, with a single field piece and a few men, to make myself answerable for the defence of the bridge. But the flotilla men and marines had placed some pieces of heavy cannon on the rising ground above the bridge, and seemed tenacious of the honour of defending the post. This corps, I understood, was not subject to General Winder's orders; the Secretary of the Navy had the *nominal direction* of it, but it was *actually under the command of the President.* It is to be regretted a practice so deservedly exploded as that of employing men under more than one independent chief, where a united effort was required, should have prevailed at that crisis."

Proof of President Madison's actual command.

Here then we have a practical demonstration of the chief command of President Madison on this memorable day; for if General Winder directed the horse, foot, and artillery, it is manifest he had no control over the marines and flotilla men, efficient corps of the army, and it will not be denied, that President Madison did command the whole.

General Ross marches for Bladensburgh

Whilst the day was thus wasted in idle discussions and fluctuating councils, which seemed to increase with the pressure of danger, the British General, to save his troops as much as possible from the excessive heat, had, at an early hour, put them in motion, directly for Bladensburgh, twelve miles from his camp, and passed the long Old Fields about 4 o'clock A. M. at 8 miles, *barely an hour's ride,* from the position of the American corps, near the Eastern Branch; and yet the commander in chief had no intimation of this decisive movement until about 11 o'clock. The interval of seven hours had been consumed in entire inaction, or inconclusive delibe-

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rations; can we have a more satisfactory evidence of the imbecility and irresolution of President Madison; his infatuation is so amazing, that could his patriotism be questioned, as is his veneration for the constitution, he might be suspected of treachery.

The President's ignorance of the enemy's approach.

I understand that Colonel Monroe, who certainly for a gentleman of his years, manifested great zeal and activity, was still on scout, and had sought repose on the night of the 23d, wide of the enemy, at the seat of my late respected friend, the venerable revolutionary patriot, Osborn Sprigg, Esq. But soon after he entered the hospitable mansion of Northampton, an express advised him of the enemy's advance towards General Winder's camp, in consequence of which he immediately mounted his horse and proceeded for the metropolis; and falling in with General Stansbury as he passed Bladensburgh, he advised him to march, gain the enemy's rear, and attack him, as the only means of saving the city; and this was the first, last, and only salutary proposition, excepting the idea suggested by General Winder the same day, which I have heard of, during the advance of the enemy; but General Stansbury being under orders to hold his position at Bladensburgh, he was not at liberty to change it, except by the authority of his legitimate superior. At this time, General Stansbury occupied the heights of Bladensburgh in *d. d.** but as is common to raw troops in alert situations, a false alarm took place about midnight, which caused the corps to stand to its arms, until two o'clock P. M. when information being received from General Winder, that he had retired to the city by the Eastern Branch bridge; to guard against the enterprise of the enemy, General Stansbury determined to place the village between them and his corps, and accordingly struck his camp and crossed to the opposite heights. This alarm and movement broke the repose of these citizen soldiers, some of them already worn down with fatigue, and contributed to unfit them for action the next day.

Mr. Secretary Monroe proposes to General Stansbury to fall on the enemy's rear, is prevented by his orders.

* See Atlas, No. XVII.

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I derive the following particulars from an officer of the Baltimore corps, a man of respectability and honour :—

Movement of General Stansbury's command.

" At early day-light on the morning of the 24th, the command of General Stansbury were roused and marched towards Washington, as I understood by an order from head-quarters,* and when within two or three miles of the city, halted and took a hasty breakfast; after which they received orders to countermarch to Bladensburgh; the road was extremely dusty and the day excessively hot, which caused great fatigue to men unaccustomed to hardships, who were all much dispirited by the apparent indecision at head-quarters, and their ignorance of the enemy's strength, position, or movements; expecting, however, from general rumour, that they were advancing towards Bladensburgh, *the principal officers concluded to form a line* fronting the village, with their right resting on the Washington road, and about half a mile from the bridge, in *m, m, n*;† they also posted four field pieces with the Baltimore artillery, and a small battalion of riflemen within a quarter of a mile of the bridge, in *h, i; this took place between* 11 *and* 12 *o'clock, at which time these troops knew not where the remainder of the army was, or of what number it consisted, for they had seen no part of it; nor did they know how or by whom they were to be supported or assisted, nor were they certain by whom they were to be commanded in the engagement, which they now knew was soon to take place; as a few horsemen had just come in, and reported the enemy at two or three miles distance, under march. About this time, Colonel Laval, with his regular cavalry, and Colonel Tilghman, with a regiment of militia light horse, arrived, and took post to the left of the line; they were followed by the President and his*

Formation of the line.

Arrival of President Madison and his suite, and approach of the enemy.

* General Winder contradicts this statement in his narrative to the committee of congress; yet in such an anomalous command, the thing might have happened without his knowledge; the fact may, I think, be fairly presumed; because, if General Stansbury had deserted his post under such circumstances, he surely would have been arrested.

† See Atlas, No. XVII.

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ministers, and General Winder and his suite; and soon after a cloud of dust in the south-east announced the near approach of the enemy, whose glittering arms betrayed them, before they exhibited themselves on the opposite heights of Bladensburgh. No change had been made in our line, nor did any more men appear to support us, except a company of infantry which was posted near the battery in *l*, and a company of artillery with three pieces, which took post on the left of the Baltimore volunteers, in *o*; but we were informed that another line would be formed in our rear, composed of regulars and militia, which could not be seen by us!!" This account of my correspondent agrees in the main, with those I have received from others, and does not disagree essentially with the report of the committee of congress, except that the latter gave the battery six instead of four pieces, and the former omits the active agency of Colonel Monroe, in forming the line and disposing of the cavalry.

Cavalry movements.

The divan, with the President at its head, which we left in consultation at the Eastern Branch, although *determined* that the enemy should attempt that pass, discovered about 10 o'clock that the cavalry could be spared from the expected conflict; they were accordingly ordered to repair to Bladensburgh, and report to General Stansbury; by antecedent drudgery and the want of forage, the dragoon horses had been broken down, and when the squadron of regulars reached the position of the troops from Baltimore, the enemy were descending the heights of Bladensburgh, and General Stansbury was sought for in vain; but Colonel Monroe happened to be at hand to relieve the embarrassment, and led the cavalry across the field in the rear of Stansbury, and posted them in a hollow at *s*, where they were securely covered from the fire of the enemy, but could not move without defiling by the right, and of course the position was not adapted to a charge; yet I have understood that the brave veteran Laval, who could draw 120 swords only, had determined to make the experiment, and for this purpose had gone forward, to keep an eye to the tide of battle in

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his front; and as the favourable moment approached, by the irregular pursuit of the enemy, he returned to his corps to put his plan into execution, but discovered that one troop of his command had gone off without leave, he knew not whither, and being now reduced to sixty-four swordsmen, he very properly determined not to throw away the lives of brave men. Of the militia cavalry, several of whom I know to be men of intrepidity, I can say nothing, because my applications for information to several of the officers have proved ineffectual, although they could have thrown much light on the subject of this chapter; about 11 o'clock the embarrassments of the President were removed, as I am informed, by the arrival of a private gentleman who had spent the preceding evening with General Ross, and announced his approach in the direction of Bladensburgh.

I would that the scenes which follow could be buried in oblivion, but the exposition may serve as a beacon to future Presidents; it is by the knowledge of truth we avoid error; and I record facts for the use of the historian and for posterity. The alarm caused by this intelligence could not be concealed from the troops; it impaired their confidence in their leaders, and damped their ardour; and the hurry of the march to the ground of action, through heat and dust, disqualified them for manly exertion and an obstinate resistance; in this movement we have another evidence of the President's actual command; the troops subject to the especial order of General Winder marched under his authority, but Commodore Barney with his flotilla men, and Major Miller with the marines, moved by direction of the President. Having seen the troops all in motion, the commander in chief, accompanied by the Secretary of War and other gentlemen of his suite, repaired to the scene of action, whither he was followed by General Winder and his staff.

President Madison repairs to the scene of action.

I beg leave to call the attention of the reader to the Atlas No. XVII., which exhibits the field of battle of the 24th of August, 1814, and the positions of the several

Atlas No. XVII. referred to.

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corps of the American army, excepting that of Colonel Kramer's battalion, which I have not been able to locate, though it bears the reputation of having acquitted itself with conspicuous gallantry. I do not offer this sketch as the result of a critical survey, but it will convey to a military eye, a clear conception of the locality, and the scale will give the distances with sufficient precision. It is in vain that professional men shall search for the excellencies of this disposition of the American army, in the parts or in the whole, in the advantages of a single point, or the combination of all, whether viewed in respect to the principles and maxims of war, ancient or modern, or with reference to the incidents of desultory warfare, which are not reducible to fixed rules; it is void of plan or proportion, concert or co-operation; and the naked truth is the best apology for it, that is, it was formed on the spur of the occasion, by pieces, and under the direction of many different chiefs, without preconcert, principle, or design. Shall I expose the particular faults of this disposition? It would not reward the pains: a few remarks will suffice. If the enemy had been *obliged* to pass the bridge, and it *could not* have been *removed* or *obstructed*, then the greatest force should have been brought to oppose them in debouching from the defile; but the disposition actually made, served only to expose the artillery to capture, or by its sudden flight, and that of its light covering party, to increase the confidence of the enemy, and depress the spirits of the American front. But as the eastern branch was every where fordable, and a considerate judicious antagonist would have crossed the creek at the forks, and turned the left flank of what was called the first line, the disposition was feeble, injudicious, and ineffectual. It is true, the temerity of the enemy, and his contempt for his antagonist, gave this disposition a different character; but then it was too remote from the defile, to command it; too remote from the advanced battery to support it; intrinsically too feeble to resist the shock of the enemy's whole force; and too dis-

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tant from, what was called, the second line, to be seasonably supported by it.

But let us enquire by whom, and under what circumstances, was this front line formed? A detachment from Baltimore, which had *not yet joined the army*, on its march to Washington, was countermanded to Bladensburgh, to take post to the best advantage, and rely upon support, *if the enemy should move upon that road.* The officers of that corps accordingly take a position, *to oppose an enemy of whose force, equipments, and route, they possessed no certain knowledge, in concert with an army of which they had only heard, and under a commander* who had not made his appearance on the ground. Such was the undisguised and unexaggerated situation of the volunteers of Baltimore and Stansbury's brigade, when the President, like another William or a Henry, presented himself to those troops surrounded by his officers of state.* Every eye was immediately turned upon the chief, every bosom throbbed with confidence, and every nerve was strung with valour. No doubts remained with the troops, that in the chief magistrate they beheld their commander in chief, who, like another Maurice, having by his irresolution in council, exposed the country to the chances and accidents of a general engagement, had now come forward to repair the error, by his activity in the field, determined to throw himself into the gap of danger, and not to survive the honour of the country, especially intrusted to his guardianship. Noble purpose! for thus only could his presence on the field of battle, at the commencement of the action, be interpreted. Enviable destiny! when a President of the United States stood prepared to immortalise his name,

The President presents himself to the troops.

* It seems from the information of the Honourable Mr. Campbell, the Secretary of the Treasury, to the Committee of Enquiry, that at this critical stage of the operations, such was the fluctuation and indecision of President Madison's mind, he had transfered the command of General Winder to General Armstrong, the Secretary of War; *but unfortunately he revoked this unconstitutional stretch of power, his cunning in this instance not forsaking him amidst his terrors.*

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by defending the national capital at the expense of his life; or surviving a triumphant conflict, to receive the highest honours of his country, and live in the affections of his fellow-citizens. That such would have been the result, if President Madison had resolutely adhered to his purpose, and given a courageous example to his fellow-citizens, there can be no doubt; for when the *Generalissimo* was observed to *court danger*, who would have dared to be a *coward?*—not a man, I verily believe, in the ranks of his whole army. The reader will perceive by turning to Admiral Cockburn's account of this affair, that General Ross, by his self-confidence, or his contempt for his enemy, or his impatience and impetuosity of temper, sacrificed every advantage of numbers, discipline, experience, and professional skill, by intemperately rushing on to battle with 1500 men only, half conquered by fatigue, and in great disorder.

Description of General Ross's force carried into action.

The circumstances in which President Madison found the first line of his army, should have induced him to press forward Commodore Barney without a halt, with the marines, his flotilla men, and Colonel Beall's militia, until he could have placed his battery on General Stansbury's right, and formed his line on that flank, in the margin of the wood; and simultaneous with, or anterior to, this movement, the regular troops under that excellent officer, Lieutenant-colonel Scott, and the corps of General Smith, should have been pushed forward, by the shortest and readiest route, the former to flank the Baltimore volunteers on the left, and the latter to have formed a second line at supporting distance; with orders to both flanking corps to close on the enemy, and to the second line to fill up every chasm which might happen in the first. The enemy thus encompassed by 6000 men, it would not have been an affair of fifteen minutes, and they must have laid down their arms. The General and Admiral would have paid for their temerity, and the panic struck rear division must have fallen, together with the marines at Marlborough, before it could have retraced its steps to that place.

What ought to have been the conduct of President Madison.

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Like another Marathon or Saratoga, then the FIELD OF BLADENSBURGH, instead of a **********, would have become the distinguished theatre of national glory, and the 24th of August would have been celebrated as the anniversary of President Madison's victory. But, alas! how shall I paint the disgraceful reverse of these proud anticipations! Not all the allurements of fame, not all the obligations of duty, nor the solemn invocations of honour, could excite a spark of courage; the love of a life which had become useless to mankind, and served but to embarrass the public councils, and prejudice the public cause, stifled the voice of patriotism, and prevailed over the love of glory. And at the very first shot, the "*trembling coward*," with a faultering voice exclaimed, "*Come, General Armstrong, come, Colonel Monroe, let us go, and leave it to the commanding General;*"* and in place of seeking death, in a blaze of imperishable glory, he ignominiously turned his back upon the enemy, and upon his country; and in the face of the whole army, was the first man to give the dastardly example of flight. What could be expected from the humble citizen, on whose existence a virtuous wife and a helpless progeny depended for sustenance, when he beheld the chief to whom he looked for conduct, unincumbered by such precious dependents, and who was responsible to the nation for the consequences he had drawn upon it, abandon his post, and retire before *the approach of danger?* What but the panic which ensued could be expected? or why should the private in the ranks persevere in danger, when his chief forsakes him, and by his desertion magnifies the danger tenfold? The *coup* was struck, and it was in vain General Winder and other brave men, exerted themselves to rally their flying fellow-citizens. To the great honour of the Baltimore volunteers, composed of uniformed companies, and embracing much personal respectability, with a high sense of military pride and ho-

Its effects on the great part of the militia.

Good conduct of the Baltimore volunteers.

* These are the words of General Armstrong, ascribed by him to the "LITTLE MAN."

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nour, they resisted the inglorious example, and maintained their ground, until finding themselves *outflanked, outnumbered, and unsupported by horse or foot,* they also gave way and retreated; but this would not have happened, if the regular troops had been posted on the left, Barney on the right, and Smith's brigade had formed a second line within supporting distance.

Description of the attack by the British.

The enemy made the attack with their light brigade, 1500 strong,* the right wing led by Colonel Brooke, of the 44th regiment, and the left by Colonel Thornton, of the 84th; they crossed the bridge in disorder, and the skirmishers advanced in loose order, and forced the battery and riflemen in *h, i,* the right wing formed in *u, u,* and followed the skirmishers, through the corn-field, *p, p,* and the orchard, *q, q,* and over the field, forward of the tobacco house, *k,* Captain Dougherty formed in *l,* gave a few fires, and retired with the rest of the troops; and the enemy pursued to the fence, 14, 14, whilst our troops generally retreated by R, R, R. Major Pinkney, I understand, was wounded near the central *r,* on the old Georgetown road, by a random shot, whilst retreating deliberately. Colonel Thornton with the left wing pushed up the turnpike road, and was about to attack the 5th regiment in flank, when it gave way; there were a great many commanders this day, and among them, not the least discerning, Colonel Wadsworth, who, to avoid interference with others, and render what service he could, had prepared, and with a few hands brought forward two field pieces, to *t, t,* on the turnpike, with intention to open and maintain a retreating fire upon the column of the enemy as they advanced, which, whilst his flanks were secure, would undoubtedly have retarded, galled, and cut them sensibly; but after the first shot, which will be found in the under work of the bridge, his men introduced the wrong end of the cartridge, and instead of drawing it, to get it out, they depressed the muzzle of

* See Appendix, No. XIX.

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the piece, until the trail and wheels overturned, and by this time the enemy was so near as to oblige them to flee for safety. Seeing the troops on his right give way, Colonel Thornton advanced, crossed the conduit, and ascended the opposite side of the ravine; but was so warmly received by Commodore Barney's battery of three 18 pounders at 4, that after some pause and fluctuation, he turned to his left, and displayed in a field in 2, 2, where he for a few rounds combated a valorous little band of the marine corps, commanded by Captain Miller, with three 12 pounders, in 3, and the flotilla men of Commodore Barney, in 5, 5, which forced him to incline to his left, and endeavour to turn the American right by a wood, in 2, 2, 2, 2, where he was met by Colonel Beall, who was formed under the summit of a conical hill, in 6, 6; and to do justice to this respectable, virtuous citizen and distinguished veteran of the revolution, I shall quote his own short account as the best evidence of his conduct. "I reached Bladensburgh," says the Colonel, "after a very rapid march in a sultry day, between 11 and 12 o'clock, and I was hastily shown a very handsome height for a gentleman's country seat, to view the country around, but not a position for militia to defend against a veteran foe, because from the steepness of the hill, the bayonets must have almost touched, before the opposite lines could see each other; this obliged me to descend the side of the hill, towards the turnpike, where I first formed, and received the fire of the enemy at less than 100 yards, which I returned and exchanged from four to six rounds, and retired towards the summit of the hill, from whence I again fired; I then fell back to the opposite side of the hill, and fired on the enemy, as he gained the top of it, and from this point my retreat was final. I do not say some of my men did not retreat too soon, but what number they were I know not. The men who buried the dead of the enemy say that near the ground I occupied sixteen were killed, and I think my loss was

Movement of Colonel Thornton.

Conduct of Commodore Barney, Captain Miller, and their corps.

Colonel Beall's statement quoted, and his conduct.

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four. The Adjutant of the first regiment of Columbia militia, says the flotilla men and his regiment retreated to the city together; and he returned and met me at the turnpike gate. You know I am no child of ambition or pretender to office, but thus much I thought due to an old brother officer, to which I will beg leave to add the following extracts of letters from Mr. John E. Howard, of the 6th Sept. and 8th Nov. 1814."

"*Baltimore, 6th Sept.* 1814.

"On my return to-day from the Potowmack, I have seen for the first time, Commodore Barney's report of the affair at Bladensburgh, in which he complains of not being supported by the troops on the hill forming the second line of General Winder's army. As I have always understood that you commanded that line, and as I am not personally known to you, I think it proper, in the probability of its being of any service, to state to you, that I was the person who delivered to you the order from General Winder to retreat, to avoid being outflanked and cut off. I acted as an aid to the General: I had not finished repeating the order, when the enemy opened a fire from the wood in front. I feel prompted to address you, from accidentally witnessing your conduct in the rear of the retreating army, when you drew a line across the road, and rallied and formed your men in regular order, before they were permitted to march on."

"*8th November*, 1814.

"I know very little of the arrangement of the different corps, and was utterly ignorant of Commodore Barney's station until some days after the battle. General Winder was in the rear of the 5th Baltimore regiment, when he told me to order the troops on the hill to retreat, on the road to Washington, or they would be outflanked and cut off. When I crossed the road (which was some distance from the orchard, to avoid the enemy) it was full of artillery wagons and pieces in full retreat. I apprehended that the order I delivered to you, was the first you had to retreat, and I perfectly recollect your reply, "*Does Gene-*

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ral Winder order me to retreat before we have fired a shot, and the men in perfect order?" and while repeating the order, the enemy began to fire from the wood which was in front of your right wing."

Mr. J. E. Howard, and a glance at the affair of the Cowpens.

The young gentleman who is the author of these extracts is unknown to me. His father, Colonel Howard, was distinguished in the revolutionary war, *particularly by turning the tide of battle at the Cowpens*, a brilliant affair, of which I have the details from that venerable patriot and soldier, General Andrew Pickens of South Carolina, who brought on the action with his militia; and I should delight to speak of that close, decisive combat, and contrast it with the vauntings of the present times, did the compass of these memoirs permit. Mr. Howard's character guarantees the candour of his statement, and the manly independence with which he testifies to the good conduct of a veteran, who fought by the side of his father, does honour to his heart.

Remarks on the order for retreat.

When General Winder saw the first line so easily routed, without adverting to the primary cause, *the example of the President*, and believing the whole force of the enemy had been brought into action, it was natural he should become solicitous for the safety of his rear; yet I consider the order for the retreat unfortunate, because of my confidence in the materials which composed what was called the second line; Major Peter's command, consisting of a company of well trained artillery, with Stull's and Davidson's companies of infantry, posted in 10, 11, 12, would have breasted any equal number, no matter of what country or corps; and if this detachment had been joined to the regular troops under Lieutenant-colonel Scott, who impatiently expected the enemy, having changed his front and advanced to meet them, in 9, 9, the exhausted Britons must have surrendered in a few minutes, or been dispersed and captured; and if Magruder's regiment, 8, had been pushed forward, passed Commodore Barney's battery, wheeled to the right, and taken Colonel Thornton in flank and rear, he would have

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shared the fate of the right wing; whilst Colonel Brent's regiment, in 13, held in reserve, could have co-operated to the right or left, if necessary.

There is no doubt that in this affair, the enemy received the most essential injury from Commodore Barney with his gallant tars, and Major Miller with his handful of marines, who bore the marks of their valour, as the annexed return will show,* which is the only one

Reference to the loss of the marine corps and the enemy.

* Return of the detachment of Marines on the field of Bladensburgh.

Captains,	-	-	2
Lieutenants,	-	-	4
Sergeants,	-	-	6
Corporals,	-	-	7
Music,	-	-	6
Privates,	-	-	78
		Total,	103

MEMORANDUM.—Of the above 8 Privates were KILLED, and

2 Captains,
1 Sergeant,
1 Corporal,
9 Privates,
} WOUNDED.

Total, 21

Names of the officers engaged.

Captain Miller, Wounded.
——— Sevier, ditto.
Lieutenant Richardson,
——— Nicoll,
——— Lord,
——— Brooke.

British Return of the killed and wounded in the action of the 24th of August, 1814, near Bladensburgh.

KILLED.

Captains,	-	-	1
Lieutenants,	-	-	2
Sergeants,	-	-	5
Rank and File,		-	56
		Total,	64

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I have been able to procure; and to it, for the satisfaction of my readers, I will add the return of the killed and wounded of the enemy, which will settle a controverted point, and show what execution was done by the few men who fought; from whence we may fairly deduce what would have been the effect, if one third of the troops had been permitted to discharge their duty as faithfully.

Whatever may have been the disorder of the retreat on the left, it is believed that the troops on the right, in general, retreated in good order, and I have no doubt Colonel Beall brought up the rear. Indeed, there was no occasion for hurry, because the enemy were exhausted, and did not pursue, as is manifest from the official letters of General Ross and Admiral Cockburn. It was a reluctant retreat, and the General and troops confidently expected to halt, and wait for the enemy in a different position; but long before they reached the strong ground east of the capital, the Commander in Chief had abdicated his palace, fled across the Potowmack, and sought an asylum among the hills, west of the great falls; and having entirely neglected the defence of the navy yard, which required little labour and less skill, (*to save it I presume from the pollution of the enemy,*) he directed it to be set on fire; indeed, such was the panic terror

The President flies from the capital—the navy yard set on fire.

Wounded.		
Lieutenant-colonels,	-	2
Majors, -	-	1
Captains, -	-	1
Lieutenants, -	-	14
Ensigns, -	-	2
Sergeants, -	-	10
Rank and File,	-	155
	Total,	185

Total of killed and wounded, 249

Memorandum.—10 horses killed, and 8 wounded.

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which had seized on him, that he ordered the sloop of war Argus, lying in the stream, to be burnt also.*

Yet his representatives still kept the ground, to superintend the conduct of General Winder and the troops; and at this late hour it was discovered, that if the advice I had endeavoured to convey to the President, by General Mason and Mr. Carroll forty-five days before, had been seasonably attended to, two millions of dollars and the national honour would have been saved: the mantle of infallibility, in which the cabinet had been clothed, was now rent, and ministers began to view things through the medium of common sense. It was not too late to think of the defence of the capital, but it was too late to effect that object, and the next best thing thought of was to continue the retreat still further; and accordingly, Colonel Monroe and General Armstrong advised General Winder to retire, and rally the troops upon the heights of Georgetown: by this decision of the representatives of the cabinet, the armed citizens of the district, the militia, the marines, the flotilla men, and the regular troops, with 600 gallant Virginia volunteers, under Colonel Minor, making a force of more than 4000 combatants, were commanded to abandon to a ruthless enemy, not only the seat of empire, but the houses, the property, the wives, and the children of the citizens. The order was received "*with an anguish beyond the power of language to express.*"† That regularity of movement which had been previously observed was destroyed, the troops gave themselves up to the uncontrollable feelings, which fatigue, exhaustion, privation, disappointment, and despair, will always pro-

Wilkinson's advice remembered.

Order for the retreat to the heights of Georgetown.

* It is related of a Danish squadron, which, during the seven years' war, had cast anchor in the Bay of Colberg, two leagues from the coast, on perceiving a Prussian column moving towards the seashore, instinctively weighed anchor and sailed away. The cases are not precisely parallel, but this instance of panic terror, may be offered as an apology for President Madison.

† See the information of Brigadier-general Smith to the Committee of Congress; yet it is believed the circumstances of the moment justified this measure.

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duce, and President Madison's army was in effect dissolved.

Enemy enters the capital.

The enemy having refreshed themselves at Bladensburgh,* moved on towards the city, which they entered with about 200 men, and so complete was the conquest, that when this party withdrew to their camp at two miles distance, a single centinel, who had been accidentally left on post near the office of the National Intelligencer, kept undisturbed possession of the central part of the metropolis until the next morning, of which there are several living witnesses. But the conquerors abused their victory,† and the Gothic outrages which ensued, like those at Hampton, *though of a different character*, were received with abhorrence by the civilised world. The following observations on this subject are extracted from the Annual Register of 1814, in which an able and candid distinction is taken between legitimate and vindictive warfare, between savage animosity and civilised hostility; and it is published in justice to the people of Great Britain, to whom President Madison owes the treaty of Ghent, rather than to the disposition of the British government,‡ or his own imbecile pusillanimous conduct.

* See Appendix, No. XIX. † See Ibid.

‡ I have received the following anecdote from a respectable character, and the sudden relaxation of the tone of the British commissioners, seems to favour its authenticity:

"Pending the negotiations at Ghent in 1814, the high tone of the British commissioners was prescribed purposely to prevent a pacification; and the Prince Regent addressing the Marquis Wellesley, expressed himself to the following effect:—"The United States made war upon me wantonly, for which they deserve punishment, and I possess the power and feel the disposition to inflict it; now can you form an administration able and willing to support my measures?" The Marquis took time for inquiry, and in a few days reported to his master, that "neither the manufacturing nor landed interests could be brought to support his views, that the grounds of the war being abandoned by those who made it, the causes of justifiable hostility had ceased, and the voice of the nation was for peace." In consequence of this communication, the instructions of the British commissioners were modified, and a peace was unexpectedly and suddenly concluded on terms which had been scouted by "sine-qua-nons."

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Extract from the Annual Register

"By the capture of Washington, the American government not only sustained a severe loss in property, but incurred much reproach from the nation, especially from the party adverse to the war, as having been the occasion of a disgrace, which it had taken no effectual measures to prevent. A vulnerable part of the republic was now exposed, and men's minds were impressed with a sense of imminent danger, where before it had been regarded only as a remote possibility. On the other hand, it cannot be concealed, that the extent of devastation practised by the victors, brought a heavy censure upon the British character, not only in America, but on the continent of Europe. It is acknowledged that strict discipline was observed, while the troops were in possession of Washington, and private property was anxiously protected; but the destruction not only of every establishment connected with war, but of edifices consecrated to the purposes of civil government, and affording specimens of the advance of the fine arts among a rising people, was thought an indulgence of animosity more suitable to the times of barbarism, than to an age, and nation, in which hostility is softened by sentiments of generosity and civilised policy.

"If there be such a thing as humanised war, its principle must consist in inflicting no other evils upon an enemy than are necessary to promote the success of warlike operations. This indeed may be construed so as to admit of a wide scope of mischief, and it will scarcely be possible to draw the line between allowable and illicit injury. But there are cases in which no ambiguity exists, and those of the destruction of useful or ornamental works, the purpose of which is altogether pacific, seem to be of this kind. History presents many instances of the hostile conflagration of palaces, which have seldom failed to be reprobated as acts of unmanly vengeance. Retaliation indeed has usually been the pretext for hostilities exceeding the prescribed measure; and in the present case the excesses committed by the Americans in their invasion

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of Canada have been made the apology for the devastations at Washington. But it has appeared in the preceding narrative that due retribution had already been inflicted for those enormities, with the promise that the punishment should not be carried further without fresh provocation. If the matter be considered in a simply political light, it can scarcely be thought desirable that unnecessary severities should be practised, which must leave a deep and durable resentment in the bosoms of a people, with whom the restoration of the relations of peace and amity is so much to be wished."

The citizens of the district of Columbia improperly censured.

The public indignation excited by the catastrophe was diverted from its author, by the headlong passions of individuals, and the corrupt and selfish interests of party, which have poisoned the fountain of public virtue, and shaken the constitution to its base; and President Madison was suffered to escape audible censure whilst the citizens of the district were scandalised by their country, and they in turn seemed to content themselves in levelling their denunciations at the Secretary of War, who certainly was nothing more than the instrument of the executive, to whom alone he was responsible. This servile courtesy, and misapplied denunciation, has become too common, and it augurs ill for the republic; but I, who was a witness to the solicitude, zeal, and patriotism of the citizens of the district, who reside in Washington and Georgetown, know that their purses, personal services, and lives, were ready for the defence of their wives, their children, and the honour of their country; and left to themselves, they would have saved the city; but they were discouraged, discountenanced, and controlled by President Madison. The inhabitants too, of Alexandria, were hastily, intemperately, and unjustly censured, because they would not, in complaisance to the President, put torches to their houses after he had withdrawn all protection from them; and yet if we recur to the principles on which the revolution was bottomed, we shall find that allegiance and protection were considered

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reciprocal. Then let it be remembered so long as the walls of the conflagrated edifice shall endure, that James Madison, President of the United States, after having by his improvidence and criminal negligence, invited the enemy to attack the national capital, preferring an inglorious existence to an honourable death, at the first dawn of danger, sought a place of security, and, without resistance, abandoned it to its fate.

It was my intention to accompany General Ross in his retreat, but it furnished neither interest nor variety; I should also have willingly pourtrayed the operations before Baltimore, but it was in vain I sought for the necessary information; the result of that affair, however, was the most auspicious which could have happened; yet the danger having ceased, the officer commanding, General Samuel Smith, was insulted for his services by the Bladensburgh fugitive, and was, I understand, censured by some of his fellow citizens, for not courting a general action with the enemy. Rash, inconsiderate, ungrateful reflection! What! stake the best blood, the fortune, the talents, the virtues and the hopes of a polished community, against a band of mercenaries, save in the last extremity!!! Barbarous thought! to what a dreadful alternative did it tend, where victory would have pierced the hearts of wives, mothers, sisters, and all the tenderest relations of life, with unalterable wo, and covered with sackcloth the city it had saved. No! the military maxim, which recommends a golden bridge for the escape of the enemy, was never more strictly applicable than in this case; and the inhabitants of Baltimore should render thanks to the Almighty, for saving them from the command of a vain-glorious, rash desperado, whose military knowledge, when taken in gross, would form but the requisite fund for a regimental Adjutant, who would, without a pang of remorse, have sacrificed half the youth of the city, to have stuck another unmerited plume in his crest.

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The defence of Fort M'Henry was of no ordinary character, for the passive resistance of danger is the test of valour; it was sustained with firm, manly resolution, and the merits of Major Armistead, who commanded there, on that and other occasions, combined with his long services, and his intrinsic excellence as an officer, gave him an indisputable right to preference over many, whom it suited the sinister policy of General Scott to retain in service; but it was Armistead's misfortune to have commanded this *military phenomenon*, and of course *he could not be a fit subject for promotion.*

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CHAPTER XVII

Vindication of the Character and Conduct of a late Commander in Chief, against a calumnious paragraph in the Biographical Sketch of Brevet-Major-General Winfield Scott.

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THE subject of this Chapter is an unwelcome one, because it is altogether personal, and can no otherwise interest the reader, than as it may excite his sympathy for the wrongs of a fellow man. It has been forced upon me by wanton and injurious aspersions, designed to gratify the malice, and indulge the vanity of an arch impostor; I therefore trust, that in exercising an unalienable right, my conduct may receive the approbation of honourable men, and be justified by meek eyed charity herself; but were the world united against me, I should pursue my purpose without hesitation, because self-defence is a paramount obligation, to which all others must yield, and whatever may be the impressions of the moment, the grave will soon silence personal animosities, and then the truths recorded by my pen, shall dissipate the mists of prejudice, and become a source of honest pride to my posterity.

It is a matter of fact, that the imbecile, temporising, vaccilating measures of President Madison, during the late war, had, towards the close of it, so sensibly impaired the public confidence, that very many of the best men of all parties, and among them some of his personal friends, anxiously desired his abdication of office; but as his well known selfishness and obstinacy of disposition opposed insuperable bars to so desirable an event, it became indispensable to the support of the cabinet, that some plan should be devised to beguile popular feelings and cheat the judgment, in order to arrest the progress of

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public sentiment which tended to unnerve all the operations of the administration; to effect so *salutary* a purpose, a veil of delusion must be spread before the people, *the end would consecrate the means*, and resort was had to intrigue and hypocrisy, the instruments of corruption and universal agents of courts; a system of misrepresentation, puffing, and exaggeration, ensued, which abashed decorum and put shame to the blush; every little advantage was swollen into a "*signal victory;*" officers without the ordinary attributes of integrity, or the smallest claim to military science or the art of war; nay, who were ignorant of the first duties of a soldier, were suddenly converted into GREAT CAPTAINS, and inflated with the dignified appellations of "ILLUSTRIOUS HEROES;" and the veterans of Wellington were beaten at Chippewa and Bridgewater, before a man of them was brought into action.* The presses groaned under biographical sketches of living characters, in which a profusion of genius, taste, talent and elegance, was displayed. These works of fancy found a ready sale in the credulity of an honest community; the artists multiplied, and the commodity was increased, until the market was overstocked, when they were offered at wholesale "*pour un rien.*" Amongst the knights errant who figure in these romances, Major-general Winfield Scott, with a *ferocious aspect*, is assigned a conspicuous place; and if he had been content to "wear his blushing honours," without attempting to pollute my humble reputation, with atrocious calumnies which aggravate antecedent wrongs, I should have been saved the painful task now imposed on me.

In the biographical sketch of this dignitary, recorded in the Analectic Magazine for December 1814, at a time when I was suffering under a cruel persecution, in the

* The Marquis of Tweedale had been an aid-de-camp of the Duke of Wellington in Spain, but was promoted, returned to England, and from thence embarked for Quebec. The 6th and 82d were the first of Wellington's troops engaged, and these were not brought into action before the siege of Fort Erie.

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origin of which I have cause to believe he had a chief agency, the reader will find the following paragraph:

"About this period, considering himself injured by General Wilkinson, Captain Scott expressed himself upon the subject, with freedom and boldness. The commanding General did not think proper to overlook this offence, and Captain Scott was arrested on the Mississippi, where he was then stationed, and brought to trial. *we have repeatedly heard his defence spoken of as admirable, both for its eloquence and biting sarcasm;** but the court would not travel out of the record, to take cognizance of the *original wrong*, nor admit of his plea of *justification*. The law was considered as imperative. Captain Scott was accordingly found guilty (under the 5th article of the rules and articles of war) of speaking with contempt and disrespect of his commanding officer, and was suspended for twelve months. He left the camp, followed by the good wishes of every officer to whom he was personally known; every one saw that the *sedition, if any*, had been committed by the *Senate*, and not by the *Gracchi*."

As no person could be so minutely acquainted with the details referred to in this paragraph, as our illustrious hero, and as no man is more capable of perverting facts to his own advantage, or could be so much interested in overstepping the bounds of truth and honour, which present no obstacles to his course, I feel myself authorised in ascribing the information, on which the preceding paragraph is founded, to the chief himself; which I shall answer by a simple narrative of facts, to enable the world to judge between a perfidious impostor and a man of honour.

In my route to New Orleans, in 1809, I called at Norfolk, to hurry the embarkation of a body of troops, assembled at that place under the orders of Colonel A. Parker, and destined to the Missisippi. The corps had

* It ought to be published in honour of the man, and for the edification of his admirers.

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been newly levied, and the relative rank of the subordinate officers had not been settled, nor was I apprised of the dates of their respective appointments. In the distribution of the companies to transports, the details belonged to the commanding officers of corps who were present, and how it happened I have no recollection, Captain Winfield Scott, of the light artillery, and Captain James Banckhead, of the 5th regiment of infantry, with their companies, were embarked on board the same vessel; and as it was indispensible there should be a senior officer, to regulate the police and discipline, and preserve the order of this detachment on its voyage, Captain Banckhead was named, surely with no design on my part, to favour him, or to offend Captain Scott, because the young gentlemen were both strangers to me.

On my arrival at New Orleans, (it will be seen in the next volume in what condition I found the troops,) I was informed that Captain Scott, of the light artillery, felt himself much aggrieved by the circumstance of Banckhead's being placed in command on board the transport; and a few days after, when engaged in my office, Captain Scott was announced, and I received him with the respect due to his rank. I do not recollect to have seen him but once before, and then only for five minutes. He was seated, appeared exceedingly confused, and at length thus addressed himself to me. "It is probable, General, you may have heard of my having written a free letter* to you, in which, under a false impression, I took liberties with you, which I now regret." I had received no such letter, and interrupted him by observing, "That my ears were not open to informers, and that the acknowledgment of an error, was all a liberal mind could desire." I treated the Captain with delicacy, and *with his permission* admonished him as to the course a subordinate officer was bound to pursue, under the circumstance

* He had written a very abusive letter, I was afterwards informed, which he intended for me, but changed his mind, and of course *gave no cause of offence.*

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of a supposed or real injury from a superior. "That the application for redress, couched in respectful language, should in the first instance be preferred to the real or supposed aggressor, and in case of neglect, or refusal to render justice, then it would be proper to carry the complaint to higher authority, until he reached the *fountain of justice*,* should it become necessary; that the vital principles of discipline forbade the individual to take justice into his own hands, and that to relax this rule would level distinctions, and tear up military subordination at the roots; that the grounds on which he might address me, were free to the privates of his company in addressing him; that vicious precedents in military corps were wholly inadmissible, because destructive of order, and that correct example was the soul of service, as it reached from the chief to the ranks, and influenced all grades. Captain Scott acknowledged himself instructed, and thanked me for my admonition, and went on to observe, "that he had entered the service on the spur of the occasion, believing war to be inevitable, but with no intention of devoting his time to military pursuits; and as the threatening storm had passed by, it was his determination to return to the practice of the law, in the study of which he had *spent his fortune;* and he continued in that strain of *soft, persuasive,* HONIED *eloquence, which he can affect, when solicitous to deceive,* that there existed another obligation, which imperiously required his presence in Virginia, and that I might readily conceive what delicacy forbade his mentioning it; and for these reasons he requested me to accept the resignation of his commission." I informed him that I was ready to indulge his desire, but that I thought it would be unjust, after the expense he had been at in equipping himself with uniform and arms, and the loss of time, that he should return home at his private expense; that in the moment the

* It may be asked where this is? I answer, it ought to be found in the *palace;* but, alas! justice has been chased from her seat, and selfish intrigues and sinister ambition have usurped her place.

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troops were assembling, whatever might be the appearances of peace, I could not consistently indulge him with a furlough; but that if he would ask one, and make his resignation the alternative, I would gratify him, and refer the case to the Secretary of War, which would enable him to draw pay for his expenses; and after his arrival at the seat of government, he might determine to continue in service, or resume his profession. He thanked me, but professed his ignorance of the particular mode of application; and I am strongly impressed with the belief, that I drafted a letter for him, which he copied and transmitted to me, and received a furlough for sixty or ninety days.

A day or two after this transaction, Colonel A. Parker of the 5th regiment called on me, and enquired whether I had given Captain Scott leave of absence; and on my answering in the affirmative, observed that he "*hoped he would be obliged to settle with his men before his departure, as they complained that he retained their pay in his hands.*" I informed the Colonel that it was not my duty to search into the accounts of my subordinate officers; but that if he would lodge a written complaint, the circumstances should be enquired into, after which I heard nothing more from the Colonel on the subject; but before Captain Scott sailed, he called on me, and requested to speak with me in private. I well remember that I walked with him on the gallery of my quarters; and at this interview he expressed himself in the following language: "*Prejudices against you, General, had been excited in my breast; but your liberal conduct towards me has done them away, and henceforward I shall defend your character whenever it may become necessary.*" This voluntary declaration was as unnecessary as it was unexpected. I made my acknowledgment with a bow, and being pressed by business, we parted without further conversation. This statement, if not verbally, is circumstantially correct, and, in giving the details, my memory is refreshed by a

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letter written on the subject to a friend, dated February 10th, 1810, which is now before me.

It is material to the sequel of this narrative, to note in this place, that Captain Scott, whilst in New Orleans, had a difference with Dr. Upshaw,* surgeon of the 5th regiment, whom he challenged to single combat; but the Doctor being confined to his bed by a disease which threatened his life, all he could do, was to promise Scott a meeting when his health might permit. The Captain had also an affair of honour about the same time, which produced a meeting with another highly honourable gentleman of the faculty, Doctor Claude of Annapolis, in which, I understand, the Captain, after delivering his fire, in order to give a *safe passage* to his adversary's ball, suddenly inclined his body to the earth, or, in another word, BOBBED; and after erecting his crest, apologised. This was the current report, and I never heard it contradicted; and there are persons who contend, that as no stipulation forbade it, he had a right even to prostrate himself on the ground, as other famed duellists have done before him, though it seems to be agreed, that the attitude is not the most chivalrous.

Captain Scott left New Orleans in June, 1809, under the general impression, justified by his solemn declarations, that he would resign; and the charge of his company devolved on Lieutenant John H. T. Estes, of Albemarle county, in Virginia, who soon after applied to me, on the subject which Colonel Parker had before mentioned, and professed his readiness to substantiate the claims of the men, whose money he said he knew Captain Scott had received; but in the absence of the Captain there was no remedy for the men, except by reference to the war department; and I did in that case what I was bound by duty, by justice, and honour to do: I in-

* This gentleman was a near relation of that exalted character and luminary of the law, Judge Roan, of Virginia. He was a man of talents, with a heart warm, generous, sympathetic, sincere, honourable, and fearless.

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formed Lieutenant Estes, if he would furnish me such written testimony as should satisfy my mind that the pretensions of the soldiers were just, I would transmit it to the war department, and write the Secretary on the subject, in order that stoppages might be made from Captain Scott, in the settlement of his accounts; and the Lieutenant accordingly addressed me the following letter, covering the documents referred to.

(Copy.)

Camp, Terre au Bœuf, July 9, 1810.

Sir,

CAPTAIN WINFIELD SCOTT having left the service of the United States, and I being the eldest officer, in his absence have had frequent applications from the greater part of the men, now under my command, for two months pay due them, to wit: September and October, 1808; which money I know that Captain Scott received at Richmond, and has not accounted to the men for; and herewith enclose a pay roll, made out by Captain W. Scott, for September and October, with the affidavit of the men present, that have not received their money from him, for the abovementioned time; and I do certify, that the remarks made by me on the pay roll, opposite their names, are accurate and just, to the best of my knowledge.

I am, Sir, respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) JOHN H. T. ESTES.

General Wilkinson.

War Department, June 28, 1810.

I do hereby certify, that the foregoing is a true copy from the original, on the files in this department.

LS. EDWARDS, *Clerk.*

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Copy. *Pay Roll of a Company of Light Artillery, commanded by Captain Winfield Scott, of the Army of the U. S. for the months of September and October.*

No.	NAMES.	Rank.	Commencement of service, or of this settlement.	Expiration of service, or of this settlement.	Term of service charged.		Pay per mo.	Amount of pay.		REMARKS.
					Mos.	Ds.		Dolls.	Cts.	
1	Winfield Scott,	Captain,								
2	John H. T. Estes,	1st Lieut.								
3	John P. Pool,	Sergeant,	Sept. 1st, 1808,	Oct. 31, 1808,	2	-	8	16		
4	George W. Smithson,	-	Aug. 29th,	-	2	2	-	16	52	
5	Benjamin Quarles,	-	Sept. 1st,	-	2	-	-	16	-	Absent on furlough, pay due.
6	Alexander Gray,	-	-	-	2	-	-	16		
7	James Roach,	Corporal,	6th,	-	1	25	7	12	83	
8	Mordecai Burgess,	-	1st,	-	2	-	-	14		
9	Thomas Gray,	-	-	-	2	-	-	14		
10	Henry Reinhard,	Fifer,	16th,	-	1	15	6	9		
11	James Farrell,	Private,	1st,	-	2	-	5	10	-	Rec'd. pay & signed rect. rolls.
12	John Mutlow,	-	-	-	2	-	-	10	-	Dead, not paid.
13	Charles Cook,	-	-	-	2	-	-	10		
14	Michael M'Donald,	-	-	-	2	-	-	10	-	Rec'd. pay & signed rect. rolls.
15	Robert D. Parkinson,	-	-	-	2	-	-	10		
16	Bartlet Belcher,	-	-	-	2	-	-	10		
17	James Hardy,	-	-	-	2	-	-	10		
18	James Cooper,	-	-	-	2	-	-	10	-	Paid, and signed receipt rolls.
19	Alexander Stewart,	-	-	-	2	-	-	10	-	Dead, not paid.
20	Bartholw. Crowder,	-	-	-	2	-	-	10		
21	Daniel Loyd,	-	-	-	2	-	-	10		

22	John Anderson,	-	July 20th,	-	3	11	-	-	-	Absent, sick.
23	Ephraim Baird,	-	Sept. 1st,	-	2	-	-	10		
24	Hubbard W. Gill,	-	-	-	2	-	-	10		
25	John Crowder,	-	-	-	2	-	-	10	-	Paid, signed receipt roll.
26	John Matthewson,	-	Aug. 31st,	-	2	1	-	10	16	
27	Thomas B. Morris,	-	Sept. 1st,	-	2	-	-	10		
28	Evans Sneed,	-	7th,	-	1	24	-	9	-	Paid, signed receipt roll.
29	John Davis,	-	16th,	-	1	15	-	7	50	
30	Pleasant Spruse,	-	-	-	1	15	-	7	50	
31	Henry S. Morris,	-	17th,	-	1					
32	Richard Daves,	-	-	-	1	14	-	7	33	
33	Daniel Lucas,	-	20th,	-	1	11	-	6	83	Deserted, not paid.
34	Jeremiah Lucas,	-	21st,	-	1	10	-	6	66	
35	John Allen,	-	23d,	-	1	8	-	6	33	
36	William Purkinson,	-	26th,	-	1	5	-	5	83	
37	George Charman,	-	18th,	-	1	13	-	7	16	
38	Schyler Borden,	-	Oct. 1st,	-	1	-	-	5		
39	John Thurmond,	-	5th,	-	-	26	-	4	33	Discharged, not paid.
40	John S. Clement,	-	12th,	-	-	19	-	3	16	Dead, not paid.
41	Hamdon Hobbs,	-	17th,	-	-	14	-	2	33	
42	Thomas Williams,	-	18th,	-	-	13	-	2	16	
43	Levi Wilson,	-	20th,	-	-	11	-	1	83	
							Dollars,	357	46	

(Triplicate.)

I certify this to be the original pay roll, made out by Captain W. Scott. The remarks here set opposite the men's names, are made by myself, and are believed to be correct.

(Signed) JOHN H. T. ESTES, *Lt. L. Artillery.*

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I certify, that the within pay roll exhibits a true state of the several sums due Captain Colin Buckner's company, agreeably to his muster rolls; and that the whole amount due to 31st October, 1808, is three hundred and fifty-seven dollars and forty-six cents.

(Signed) JA. S. SWEARINGEN,
Deputy Pay Master.

Fort M'Henry, Nov. 10, 1808.

There is here a mistake in writing Captain Buckner's name for Captain Scott's. The amount stated to be due is exactly the amount of Captain Scott's pay roll.

War Department, June 28, 1810.

I do hereby certify, that the foregoing is a true copy from the original, deposited in this department.

I.S. EDWARDS, *Clerk.*

(COPY.)

We, the undersigned, non-commissioned officers, musicians and privates, of Captain Winfield Scott's company, regiment light artillery, do solemnly swear, that we have not received any pay from the United States, for our services during the months of September and October, 1808; and that we have not signed, at any time, any receipt roll for our pay, for the months of September and October, 1808.

(Signed)

John P. Pool,	
George W. Smithson,	
Alexander Gray,	
James Roach,	
Mordecai Burgess,	Witness,
Thomas Gray, *his* × *mark.*	W. S. Hamilton.
Robert Perkinson, *his* × *mark.*	W. S. Hamilton.
Bartlett Belcher, *his* × *mark.*	W. S. Hamilton.
James Hardy, *his* × *mark.*	W. S. Hamilton.
Bartholomew Crowder, *his* × *mark.*	W. S. Hamilton.

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Daniel Lloyd,	
Ephraim Baird,	
Hubbard W. Gill,	
John Madison,	Witness,
John Davis, *his* × *mark.*	W. S. Hamilton.
Pleasant Spronce, *his* × *mark.*	W. S. Hamilton.
Richard Daves,	
Jeremiah Lucas, *his* × *mark.*	W. S. Hamilton.
John Allen,	
William Perkinson, *his* × *mark.*	W. S. Hamilton.
G. Charman,	
Skilos Borden,	
Hamdon Hobbs, *his* × *mark.*	W. S. Hamilton.
Thomas Williams, *his* × *mark.*	W. S. Hamilton.
Levi Wilson, *his* × *mark.*	W. S. Hamilton.
Thomas B. Morris, *his* × *mark.*	W. S. Hamilton.
Henry Reinhard.	

Sworn and subscribed to, before me, at camp, Terre au Bœuf, this 9th day of July, 1809.

(Signed) W. S. HAMILTON, 1*st Lt.* 3*d Infantry*, *Judge Advocate.*

War Department, June 28, 1810.

I do hereby certify, that the foregoing is a true copy from the original, deposited in this department.

LS. EDWARDS, *Clerk.*

The aspect of these documents certainly could not but excite my surprise and disgust, because the misapplication of the pay drawn for men under his immediate guardianship, who looked to him for protection, and were suffering exceedingly for the want of it, was too clearly proven to be doubted; and certainly tended to affect my confidence in him as a man of probity: and under this well-founded impression, I recommended to the Secretary of War the acceptance of his commission; in this and in the transmittal of the papers, I could not be biassed by personal animosity, because Captain Scott had

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at parting professed himself to be my friend, but I barely discharged my duty to the soldiery, who had been abused, to my profession, and to my country; and I never heard more of those documents until June, 1810, when I found occasion to demand a copy of them.

Captain Scott, on his arrival at the seat of government, contrived to have his furlough extended, and did not join his company again until November or December; a dreadful scene of mortality among the troops had intervened, which must have swept off a considerable number of his men. I had myself been reduced to the verge of the grave, but had reached Washington in the Missisippi territory with those who survived; and at that place Captain Scott presented himself to me, in great perturbation, for he had exceeded the extension of his furlough, and appeared alarmed lest I should take advantage of the lapse. I however soon put his mind at ease on that score, and he then mentioned to me, that, during his absence, reports had been circulated injurious to his reputation, and expressed great anxiety for an opportunity to vindicate his character. He proceeded to ask my advice in respect to the course he should pursue, and I made no hesitation to recommend to him a court of enquiry, the ordinary procedure in such cases, which he accordingly requested, and it was immediately granted.

It must be remembered, that Captain Scott and Dr. Upshaw had differed in New Orleans, and the illness of the latter only prevented an interview. Upshaw recovered his health some weeks after Captain Scott's departure, and on hearing from Lieutenant Estes that the Captain had detained his men's pay, he spoke irreverently of him, and proclaimed the transaction a robbery. I do not recollect whether the Doctor interfered in the enquiry, but after it was known that the court had reported cause for investigation, by a general court martial, he presented charges against Captain Scott to the proper officer, which being communicated to me, I urged the accuser, most earnestly, to withdraw the charge, which involved

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my name, but without effect, and if I had possessed the power, I should have coerced him; because General Hampton was hourly expected to relieve me from the command, and I was sensible, if my reputation could be affected by the intemperate abuse of a vain-glorious coxcomb, without other character than that of a gambler, it could not be sustained by the opinion of a general court martial.

General Hampton's arrival, for which, by the bye, I waited some weeks, released me from all agency or participation in the trial of Captain Scott, although it was in my power to have appointed a court, which would have paid more respect to their own characters, to the laws of decorum, and the principles of subordination, than to have suffered my name to become the daily theme of the prisoner's slanderous invectives.

On observing the offensive paragraph, which has produced this exposition, I made application to A. J. Dallas, Esq. Secretary of War, *ad interim*, for a copy of the trial, which had been thus perverted to eulogise General Scott, and to stigmatise my character; but it did not comport with the justice of the Executive, to furnish the man whom he had attempted mortally to injure, the means of vindicating his innocence; and after having served my native country my whole life, I had the agonising mortification to be refused, what I considered a fair request, by a foreigner, and an adventurer, who had reached these states posterior to the revolution; and by the same hand, were many of the most meritorious officers, whose lives had been devoted to the country, dismissed its service. I have however fortunately procured from another source, certain facts respecting this trial of Captain Scott, which may serve to expose the gross misrepresentations, set forth in the paragraph which has been fabricated to ornament his life at my expense.

The court of enquiry was I think held about the beginning of December, 1809; on the 18th of that month, I surrendered the command to Brigadier-general Hamp-

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ton, and if my memory does not mislead me, the general court martial, for the trial of Captain Scott, did not assemble until the 10th of January, 1810, before which time the apple of discord had been thrown, and the corps which I had left in harmony was distracted by personal animosities. The public may be enabled to form a faint idea of the merits of General Scott's biographical sketch, when they are informed, that he was not arrested for his abuse of General Wilkinson in consequence of a real or supposed injury, but substantially on the following charges, viz.

"1st. For drawing two months of his company's pay, and withholding it from the men.

"2d. For seditious and insubordinate language, respecting the commanding general, declaring, that if he should go *into the field with him, he would carry one pistol for his enemy, and one for his general.*"

I have no notes of the specifications, but according to the regulations, the accuser was obliged to designate the time and place of the menaced assassination, which I have been informed was at Richmond in Virginia, in the autumn of 1808, several months before I had ever seen Captain Scott, and yet the paragraph modestly states that the Captain *considered himself injured by me.*

By reference to the muster roll produced by Lieutenant Estes, and the depositions taken by the Judge Advocate, Lieutenant Hamilton, it will appear that Captain Scott, in the months of September and October, 1808, had pocketted the pay of 36 men, of whom three had died, one had deserted, and one had been discharged. And I have not understood that out of this number, more than two were called to give testimony on his trial, in support of the 1st charge—viz. James Roach, a corporal, and Hubbard W. Gill, a private. These men, I have been advised, swore positively, "that their pay, for September and October, 1808, had been *stopped by Captain Scott without their direction, and they knew not wherefore,* and that *after the court of enquiry,* which had produced his arrest, and

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not before, *he paid them the balance due to them, which he had detained in his hands more than fourteen months.* I also understood that Captain Scott's plea for the stoppage of this money, was his purchase of certain necessaries for his men; but then Roach's pay received by the Captain, appears from the muster roll to have been $12 83, which he swears the Captain detained from September and October, 1808, until after the court of enquiry, say December, 1809, for the security of a claim of $2 50. In respect to that part of the 2d charge which relates to the *threat of assassination*, the witness called negatively justified it, though he was suffered by the court to evade the question, repeatedly put to him, by declaring he could not "*recollect time or place*," which was an indirect admission of the fact, because if the words had not been uttered, conscience, honour, and justice, all enjoined it on him, to acquit the prisoner, a brother officer, of a foul and infamous charge which stained the garb he wore.

But Captain Scott did not confine his Billingsgate slanders to taverns and gambling tables. He was suffered to scandalise the court with the vilification of my character, and even to engraft his abuse of me on his boasted defence, which I should have done him the justice to publish, could I have procured a copy of it; and yet I solemnly declare, I had no part either in his arrest or prosecution, and in support of this declaration I will add an extract, with which I have been recently furnished, from Doctor Upshaw's rejoinder to Captain Scott's famous defence, the whole of which ought to be with the trial at the war office. To those who knew the Doctor, whom the grave has long since received, it would be unnecessary to speak of his veracity, but to the stranger it may be proper to say, it was not only unimpeached, but above suspicion.

Extract from Dr. Upshaw's Reply to Captain Scott's Defence.

"Before I treat of the evidence, I have to do an act of justice to General Wilkinson, by denying most point-

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edly, that this prosecution was (as represented by the prisoner) commenced at his instance, and I further affirm, that he never saw the charges before the arrest, to my knowledge."

"I now conclude my imperfect reply to the prisoner's long and learned defence, and have to regret that the performance of some professional duties on yesterday, deprived me of the necessary time to arrange and adjust my thoughts in such a way as to do justice to the prosecution and myself. I have one more remark to make to the court, and I have done: in every part of this trial the prisoner has indulged himself in the bitterest invective against General Wilkinson; he has even embodied it in his defence, and it is spread on your records. Let it be recollected, General Wilkinson wears the sword of his country; that he has spent more than twenty-five years in its service; that he fought the battles of his country before the prisoner had quitted the arms of his nurse, and by his talents and his valour assisted to atchieve the *liberty* this young man now *wantonly* and *wickedly* abuseth. "*We are to esteem every man innocent before he is found guilty.*" This is the language of the prisoner, yet how shamefully does he abuse the doctrine?"

It is a matter of justice to General Scott to state, what I have understood to be the sentence of the court, and if it be incorrect, the war office is open to him, though shut against me, viz.

"After due deliberation, &c. the Court finds the prisoner guilty of the first charge, but acquit him of fraudulent intentions,* and of the second charge in speaking disrespectfully of the commanding General, but not of the words charged, and sentence him to one year's suspension from rank, pay, and emoluments."

* Yet he was convicted of drawing and detaining his company's money, whilst he left the men on the Missisippi, and himself returned to the Atlantic states with the professed intention to resign; and before he again joined his company, many of the men died, probably for the want of the money he had improperly detained.

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The reader will observe that this sentence embraces the third degree of military punishments, but it will be obvious to him, that the prisoner *merited the first*, and if the trial had been judicially conducted, he certainly would have *received the second*. The trial was followed by a duel between Captain Scott and Dr. Upshaw, on the invitation of the former, who, as in the affair with Dr. Claude, came off second best. The meditated combat became notorious over the country before the meeting, which took place on the right bank of the Missisippi, opposite the city of Natchez, the western heights of which were crowded by several hundred spectators, citizens and officers of the army, some of the former having rode twenty miles to witness the tournament. But let it be remembered, that at the time I was divested of command and authority, and I could produce testimony to show, I did what I consistently could to prevent the meeting, in which I was moved by a sense of duty, of justice, and religion; which has impelled me, successfully, in more than twenty instances, to promote explanations and prevent the Gothic appeal; but in this particular case, a sentence of dishonour rested on Captain Scott, and Upshaw was crippled by the rheumatism, and scarcely able to keep his feet, his trigger finger being swoln to almost double size; but he recurred to the old engagement at New Orleans, and felt himself bound to meet the challenger; and in regulating the ceremonials to be observed at the interview, the Doctor, I was informed, expressly stipulated that there was to be no "*ducking*, *bobbing*, or *dodging*."

I heard nothing more of Captain Scott until he appeared as Judge Advocate on the trial of Colonel Cushing, in which case he is lavishly complimented for his rejoinder to the Colonel's defence; I have never seen this invective, for such I am assured it is, and therefore can offer no opinion of its merits; but when a judge advocate travels out of the line of his duty, and descends to torture or distort the law or the evidence, for the conviction of any

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man, much less a respectable and abused brother in arms, he enters the lists of persecution, overleaps the bounds of humanity, and betrays other motives than a respect for his station and a love of justice. Colonel Cushing had been persecuted by General Hampton, with a degree of cruelty and despotism,* which would have disgraced any man, but a driver of the ill-fated Helot; and President Madison and his Secretary of War Eustis, contemplated the wanton outrage on human rights and the written law, with an indifference for which they both merited the reprobation of every friend of civil liberty or military justice. It was Colonel Cushing's fault to be my friend, because I was poor; it was his misfortune to have General Hampton for a persecutor, because he was rich; and as to Captain Scott, whether he had transferred his hatred of myself to my friend, or was subsidised by Hampton, after the consumption *of his fortune on his law education*, is a matter of little import; since, by lending his assistance to the iron hand of usurpation, for the oppression of the war-worn veteran, who had *fought* and *bled* in the cause of his country, he devoted all the feelings of the heart to vengeance and venality.

When I was ordered to the Mississippi in 1812, Captain Scott left that country with his patron General Hampton, and arriving at the seat of government, *his seditious conduct in the abuse of the senior officer of the army, and the dishonourable misapplication of the pay of his men, recommended him so strongly to the patronage of President Madison and his Secretary Eustis, that they nominated him to a Lieutenant-colonelcy of Artillery*, over many older and better officers, who had served their country ten and fifteen years, for at that time Scott did not understand the axis from the visual range of a gun; in-

* The exposition of the illegal and barbarian treatment of Colonel Cushing, which was before President Madison and Doctor Eustis, would at this day excite emotions of horror throughout the community; and yet General Scott is eulogised for joining in the persecution of this virtuous citizen, and meritorious veteran of the revolution. O tempora! O mores!

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deed I doubt whether he could take the distinction now; but that illustrious body, the senate of these states, the sheet anchor of the constitution, ventured, as they do sometimes, and, with humility I think, ought to do more frequently, to question the Presidential infallibility, in the nomination of this son of sedition; for they had heard something of his conspicuous doings, and the distinguished honours he had received on the banks of the Mississippi; and it was to the exertions of my respected friend Mr. Giles of Virginia, that he owed the confirmation of his nomination; and notwithstanding the impudent ground of justification, which this full born son of Gracchus has set up in the biographical sketch of himself, he, at that time, professed his sorrow for the liberties he had taken with me, and pleaded the heat, inexperience and imprudence of youth, to extenuate his sins; Mr. Giles, in answer to certain objections which had been made to the confirmation of Lieutenant-colonel Scott's nomination, took the ground of his youthful indiscretion, and consciousness of the impropriety of his conduct, to palliate the offences of Captain Scott, and reminded his honourable associates of the uniform interest he had taken in whatever related to my humble fortunes; inferring from thence that it must be impossible he should advocate the cause of the Lieutenant-colonel, if he believed him inimical to me; this reasoning prevailed, and the nomination was confirmed. I had this little detail from Mr. Giles, in my passage through Washington in 1813, on my way to take the command of the army on the northern frontier. CHAP. XVII.

In the prosecution of my duty, as will be more particularly explained in the third volume of these memoirs, I reached Fort George in Upper Canada the beginning of September, in such ill health as to be confined to my bed and apartment; a few days after my arrival, I was informed by an officer of my family, that Colonel Scott felt some delicacy in waiting on me, as he did not know how he would be received; I replied that the diffi-

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culty was imaginary, and desired him to inform Colonel Scott, he would be received with all the respect that was due to his rank. The Colonel called on me the r ..., and found me sitting up; he approached me with more marked embarrassment than at New Orleans; I arose, gave him my hand, begged him to be seated, and, by the unaffected civility with which I received him, soon put him at ease; after the ordinary inquiries, Colonel Scott requested leave to enter into an explanation of past circumstances, and was proceeding, but I interrupted him by observing that explanation could do no good to either of us, and it would be better to consign the past to oblivion; that we were entering upon an arduous service from which our country expected much, and that it was our duty to combine our efforts to fulfil those expectations; and that he might rely on me for every attention, to which his rank and services could give him a claim. I was ill at the time, and therefore cannot charge my memory with particular expressions, but the preceding statement is substantially correct. Colonel Scott appeared satisfied with his interview, and my subsequent conduct is the best test of my sincerity.

Some days after this interview, understanding that the enemy's batteaux were secured in a creek about twelve miles distant, under a weak guard, I spoke to Colonel Scott on the subject; he credited the report, appeared to understand the topography of the country, and offered his services, with a select detachment of 300 or 500 men, to destroy them. It was an object of great moment to the contemplated operations of the army to deprive the enemy of water transport, as it would retard their movement to the succour of their posts below; I therefore closed with the proposition, as my own transports were not ready to receive the troops, and the squadron had not arrived for our convoy down the lake. Colonel Scott selected his detachment, and embarked after night-fall, to elude the observation of the enemy, whose left flank he was obliged to pass. I understood this command excited

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the jealousy and discontent of the senior Colonels, in the camp, who viewed it as a measure of undue partiality; and, in such cases, from the frailty and selfishness of man's nature, the partizan will rarely carry with him the benedictions of all who remain behind; a tempest arose in the night, the boats were dispersed, and Colonel Scott returned the next day, without being able to account for his detachment; the discomfiture excited a camp titter, and the Colonel presented himself to me, overwhelmed with mortification; what was my conduct? "*There are those,*" said I, "*who will exult in your disappointment, Colonel; but never mind it; you could not control the winds, and I will justify you.*" The enemy had penetrated the intended movement, but had no idea of its destination; how capricious is man's fortune; the road to fame was now open to me; I saw, and languished to tread it; but my orders, reiterated orders, forbade me; my force was competent to have destroyed De Rottenburgh; my boats were ready; we commanded the lake; I could have slipt into his rear and demolished or captured his division in twenty-four hours. It pleased the Almighty to direct otherwise, and I am content with my destiny. Contrary to my will, I was obliged to hold Fort George instead of razing it, as I had determined; and all the misfortunes on the western frontier of New York, which ensued the next winter, was the consequence. It was a fair presumption, that after the departure of the division, the enemy might attempt to carry the place, in the expectation it would be left with a weak garrison; the trust was of the first magnitude, and I selected Colonel Scott for the command.

We parted, and my next interview with the Colonel was near Prescott, the evening before the troops past that place, where I received an unexpected visit from him; the meeting will be described in the third volume of these memoirs; the expressions of my feelings were sincere; but alas! how were they returned; my boat, my accommodations, my bed, were free to the gentleman; and next morning, when more dead than alive, from the

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fatigue and exposure of the preceding night, I gave Colonel Scott, who had left his corps behind him, an enviable command. We parted again, and I saw him no more, until he entered my chamber at a Doctor Mann's, on Salmon River, near the French Mills. He had obtained a furlough, and was "going on to the seat of government, to make arrangements for equipping and recruiting his corps, preparatory to the ensuing campaign, and to pass into Virginia *to look after his private estate.*" He pressed my feeble, helpless hand, and when I complained of my hard fortune, he affected to pour balm into my afflicted bosom, by assuring me, that although his relations with General Hampton, would prevent his saying any thing against that officer, "*my conduct should be placed on its proper ground, and that he should vindicate it against censure.*" There was no witness to this conversation; but my physicians, Dr. Bull and Dr. Mann, were privy to Colonel Scott's visit to me, in my chamber. I forget whether my aid-de-camp Colonel Pinkney was with me at the time, or whether he had been sent in pursuit of the fugitive Hampton, whom I had determined to arrest, in consequence of the duplicity in which I had detected Armstrong, by Hampton's betrayal of his letter* of November 15th, 1813.

With these professions on his lips, *which the Father of Heaven can witness were made to me by Colonel Scott,* he arrives at Albany, and there discovering that the Secretary of War had determined to make me the scape goat for the failure of the campaign,† he yields to his secret hatred of a man, *whom he had too deeply injured ever to forgive,* and forgetting my treatment of him, and his own voluntary promises, he outstrips the perfidy displayed on the Mississippi, and as I have *been informed and do verily believe,* attempted in whispers to blast my character, by imputing to me the beastly crime of drunkenness, at a time when I laboured under a disease which menaced my

* See Volume III. page 374.

† See testimony of Colonel King, Volume III. page 78.

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life, and would have confined almost any other man to his bed; hence, I have no doubt, his reluctance to appear before the general Court Martial at Troy; and notwithstanding my earnest supplications, he was protected against the authority of the court, by avocations* from the war department, not of an urgent nature, which were devised after it was known there that he was relied on as a material witness in my case. I hope the author or authors of this secret slander may still be dragged to the light; for myself, I can have no further claim on President Madison, but that the slanderers should be exposed by way of warning to society; and they are known to him, if credit may be reposed in the following report, which is imputed to the then Secretary of War, General Armstrong: "On the 19th of February, 1814, the Secretary of War reported to the President, that he had some time before received a communication, of which the paper enclosed and marked (A) was an extract, that sensible of the *delicacy** of military reputation, he was in no haste to act upon it, nor even officially to submit it to the President's inspection; that the reason for that hesitancy was now removed; that he had in two instances followed the references made in the communication; and that in both the truth of the principal charge, drunkenness, had been confirmed; that a sense of duty compelled him to propose, that General Wilkinson be relieved from the command of the army and district, and that a court of inquiry be instituted, as speedily as possible, for the purpose of examining and deciding whether his conduct had or had not been censurable during the last campaign."

This anticipation of a subject which will be treated at large in the third volume of these Memoirs, is incidently brought forward to jusitfy my suspicion of General Scott's agency in my persecutions. It will be seen in the celebrated report of the Secretary of War, of January 25th, 1814, that Colonel Scott contributed his mite of information against me, for which he received the reward of a

* See Trial, Volume III.

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separate command, erected within my proper district, and in the first set of charges produced against me, "*my orders to Colonel Scott at Fort George,*" were made a ground of crimination, *which must have been furnished by him for the purpose,* but were afterwards discovered to be too ridiculous for grave consideration, and were therefore omitted in the *second and third editions* of those charges; and now, to give the finishing touch to hypocrisy, I am told this spurious *champignon, whose praise I must consider censure,* speaks of me with respect.

It may be proper in this place to remark, that the report of General Armstrong exposes a trait in the administration of the meek, candid, amiable and virtuous President Madison, well worthy the attention of all, who disapprove the dark deeds of despotic governments, and more especially of military commanders, whose standing and characters have become dependent on a servile acquiescence in the caprices and usurpatory acts of the executive, through his minister of war; for it must never be forgotten, that during the reign of this President, an authorised system of *Espionage* was introduced into the American army, and secret informations were invited and received from the corrupt, seditious, and insubordinate, who infest all armies; thus subjecting a chief selected for a special command and a dire responsibility, to the calumnies of unfledged subalterns, whereby public confidence is destroyed, the principles of subordination and discipline prostrated, the essential interests of the service vitally injured, and the bands of justice violated; these are among the numerous misdeeds of President Madison, of which his contemporaries and posterity are to judge. The organ of his will has set forth, that among my secret accusers there were "three *of the General officers who had served under me,*" of whom, if I mistake not, one was perjured on my trial; another swore roundly in my vindication; and the third, like Major-general Scott, declined swearing or affirming at all. Yet notwithstanding those high-sounding charges, neither my conduct, nor my honour, could be affected.

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Here I shall leave this legitimate descendant of the Gracchi, a noisy democrat, a silent federalist, and a subtle tyrant, who would sooner "reign in hell than serve in heaven," to the enjoyment of the rich bequests of his adopted ancestry; and will intreat of the candid reader to compare the injurious paragraph in the biographical sketch of Major-general Winfield Scott, with the facts set forth in these sheets; by which he will be enabled to decide impartially, that the sedition on the Mississippi was on the part of Gracchus, who not only threatened and reviled the senate without provocation, but, to the subversion of all order, endeavoured to seduce into sedition and disorder, those whose rights he pretended to espouse; and in this manner he demonstrated his respect for the principles and conduct of his *predecessors*, with whom nor *tribunes*, nor *senates*, nor *vestal virgins*, when they interfered with their *ambitions or sinister designs*, were for a moment safe; and from the same sources the following facts may be clearly ascertained, viz: Whether General Wilkinson was vindictive or Captain Scott treacherous; whether the General's frankness was not returned with hypocrisy, his kind offices with ingratitude, his sincerity with deceit, and his magnanimity with perfidy.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

A Glance at the Military Services of Major Allen M'Lean, with an Explanation of the Marquis de la Fayette's Movement upon Barren Hill.

TURNING from the disgusting subject of the last Chapter, and leaving to courtiers and sycophants the contemplation of modern biographical sketches, which serve to cheat the understanding of honest men, to pamper the vanity of pretenders, and advance the ambitious views of impostors, I will invite the reader to participate the pleasures I enjoy, in rescuing from oblivion the services of one revolutionary brother, and placing on its true grounds the professional conduct of another, which appears to have been imperfectly understood by the American biographer.

After the misfortunes of the campaign, the loss of Philadelphia, and the affair of Germantown in 1777, General Washington took a strong position at White Marsh, thirteen miles from his antagonist, Sir William Howe; and about the first of December, after the junction of the troops who had conquered General Burgoyne, he found himself in sufficient force to give Sir William battle, should he be inclined to hazard a combat.

Having taken this position, it became necessary to the safety of the American army, that a light corps of observation should be constituted to hang upon the enemy's front, under the conduct of an officer, who had been tried and distinguished for activity, vigilance, valour, and discretion; and General Washington conferred the signal honour upon Captain Allen M'Lean, a native of Philadelphia, for whose command, a party of dragoons, and

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one hundred and fifty men, with four subalterns,* were selected from the line of the army, in virtue of the following General Order, viz : CHAP. XVIII.

" The detachment of 150 men, for Captain M'Lean's command, to be furnished by Woodford's, Scott's 1st Pennsylvania, 2d Pennsylvania, Poor's, Glover's, Larned's, Patterson's, Weedon's, Muhlenberg's, Maxwell's, Conway's, Huntingdon's, and Varnum's brigades. The dragoons by Major Clow."

With this detachment, the Commander in Chief charged Captain M'Lean, with the arduous duty of watching the movements of the enemy, and intercepting the communication of the city with the country, between the Delaware and the Schuylkill rivers; and he marched from Head-Quarters on this service, the 18th of October, 1777, under the following orders and instructions.

" *Head-Quarters, Oct. 12th,* 1777.

" To Allen M'Lean, Esquire, Commandant of a party of observation—

" Sir,

" Your being acquainted with the country in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia, will take post most advantageous for watching the enemy, sending out the necessary parties and patroles, for that end and your own security; you are to prevent, as far as possible, all intercourse between Philadelphia and the country, suffering none to go to the city without passes given by the authority of the Commander in Chief; nor are you to permit any person to come from the city, into the country, unless they come out with an intention not to return;

* Lieutenant Cass, of New Hampshire, a meritorious officer, who served in the army which captured Burgoyne, with distinguished bravery; he rose to a Majority, resigned, and settled in the state of Ohio, father of Governor Cass; Lieutenant Dover, a respectable citizen, living near Philadelphia; and Lieutenants Armstrong and Quin, both gallant officers, now dead.

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or are persons from whom material intelligence may be gained; and in the latter case you will send them on to Head-Quarters, under the care of a dragoon; you will also endeavour to gain the best intelligence relative to the enemy, and communicate the same to the Commander in Chief.

"TIMOTHY PICKERING, *Adj. Gen.*"

GENERAL ORDERS.

"No passes to be given to any one to go into Philadelphia, but by the Major-general of the day, who will not grant them without due examination, and upon the reasonable and necessary occasions."

Queries in writing from General Washington to Captain M'Lean, Commandant of a party of observation, 1777—

1st. What number of troops supposed to be in General Howe's army, and how disposed of?

2d. What works thrown up in and about the city, and what cannon in them?

3d. Have any detachments been made over to Jersey, and for what purpose?

4th. How many men have they sent over there, and how many pieces of cannon?

5th. What kind of cannon, whether only field pieces or larger cannon?

6th. What preparations are they making on the water? are they fitting out ships, gallies, fire rafts, or floating batteries?

7th. Do they think they can stay in Philadelphia if their shipping cannot pass the forts?

8th. Can you discover, whether they will attempt any thing against the forts, and when? Observe carefully the preparations making on the river and along the wharves; it is of great importance to know the precise time, or as near it as possible.

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9th. Is there any talk of leaving Philadelphia, and by what route; observe carefully what they are doing with their wagons; whether their baggage is packed up, and what directions their wagons receive?

10th. Are the tories and friends of the British army under much apprehension of their leaving the city? and what preparations are they making to remove themselves or their effects?

11th. For what purpose is it understood the bridge is thrown over the middle ferry, and what force is kept on the west side of the Schuylkill?

12th. Has the bridge has been injured by the late storm, or is it passable?

13th. Where are the grenadiers, light infantry, and rangers, and are they making any preparation to move?

14th. What number of men are sent over to Carpenter's and Province islands, and how often are they relieved?

15th. In what condition are those banks since the late rain; can wagons and carriages pass so as to transport provisions and stores from the ships to the city?

16th. In what condition are the troops for provisions, and of what articles is there the greatest scarcity?

17th. How are the inhabitants situated for provisions?

18th. What impression has the news of General Burgoyne's surrender made on the British army?

19th. Is there any conversation in the British army, or among the inhabitants, of General Howe's coming out to meet General Washington?

20th. What is the British army employed about?

21st. Does continental money rise or fall in value in the city?

22d. Can you learn whether there are any preparations making, or any intentions to go up the Delaware, to burn the frigates and vessels?

23d. Find out what duty the soldiers do, and whether they are contented; how many nights in the week are they in bed?

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24th. Inquire particularly into the treatment of the prisoners in the new jail, so that, if necessary, you can make oath of it?

25th. Do the enemy compel any of the prisoners to enlist by starving or otherwise ill treating them?

26th. Find out how far the redoubts between Delaware and Schuylkill are apart, and whether they are connected by lanes and abbatis.

Captain M'Lane exercised this critical, important, and perilous command, until the beginning of January, when General Washington found it necessary to send him into the state of Delaware, to procure provisions for his starving army at Valley Forge, on which service the Captain acquitted himself with his usual activity and effect. He resumed his command before Philadelphia, the 12th of April, where he continued until the enemy evacuated that city, the 18th June, 1778. A detailed account of the rencontres and skirmishes in which he was engaged, and the perils and hair-breadth escapes which occurred during that period, would make a volume, but my limits only permit me to notice a few of the more important instances, connected with other operations of the war, in which his services were conspicuous.

Having received advice of a meditated movement of the enemy, General Washington addressed to Captain M'Lane the following letter:

"*November 28th*, 1777.

"Sir,

"I have certain information, that Lord Cornwallis returned from Jersey yesterday, and 'tis said they intend an attack upon the army, with their joint force, before General Green can rejoin us; I therefore depend upon your keeping a good look out upon their lines, and gaining every intelligence from people coming out of town, that I may have the earliest notice of their movements or intentions.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"GO: WASHINGTON."

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In consequence of this letter, M'Lane adopted the necessary precautions to ascertain the designs of the enemy, and on the 3d of December he received satisfactory information of a meditated movement against the American army, which he communicated to the General, and received the following answer:

"Captain A. M'Lane,

"Sir,

"His Excellency received your letter containing intelligence, and thanks you; he has only to request your most active exertions in making the earliest discoveries of the enemy's intention, and to give him notice.

"I am, Sir,

"Your humble servant,

"R. K. MEADE, *A. D. C.*"

On the morning of the 4th December, a confidential intelligencer advised the Captain, that the enemy were getting ready to march out of the city the ensuing night, with intention, it was said, to surprise the American army. He immediately conveyed the intelligence to General Washington, and directed his men to repose themselves; at night fall he marched down the Germantown road, and disposed of his detachment on its flanks at the four mile creek; about 10 o'clock P. M. his advanced patrole apprised him of the approach of the enemy, and he soon after heard the advanced guard, under Lord Cornwallis, and suffered it to come very near him, before he delivered his fire, which being quickly repeated, and briskly kept up, his Lordship halted and formed his line before he advanced; M'Lane retired before him, and, having instructed his detachment, man by man, for their conduct, he hung upon and harassed the head of the enemy's column until day break, when they reached Chesnut Hill; and thus, by his vigilance, resolution, and perseverance, he retarded General Howe's march, and prevented a night attack on General Washington's centre,

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losing on this occasion, a sergeant and two men only, who were killed. I give from General Howe's order of march, the several corps* which composed his force on this operation, from which military men may compute his strength. This enterprise on the part of the British General, betrayed great imbecility and irresolution, whilst the conduct of General Washington manifested that tranquil decision, which could not be discomposed. The American right and centre were impracticable by day, but the left might have been turned, which would have compelled General Washington to change his front or attack his adversary; and from his known character, it is well understood he would not have paused for a resolution a moment, if Sir William had opened his own flank; but the wary British General manœuvred and skirmished occasionally from General Washington's centre to his left until the 8th, and then precipitately retired to Philadelphia; his own army humiliated by mortification and disappointment, and that of the United States animated with pride and self confidence. Captain M'Lane, after accompanying the British General to Chesnut Hill, made a detour by his left, threw himself upon his rear, and actually interrupted his free communication with Philadelphia, taking several prisoners.

As the spring opened, and the season for operations approached, to put the men in exercise, and to approximate an elite corps to the enemy, General Washington

* Van guard under the command of Lieutenant-general the Earl of Cornwallis—Two battalions of light infantry; chasseurs dismounted; British grenadiers; Hessian grenadiers; 4th brigade British; two squadrons 16th dragoons; two medium twelves; two howitzers.

Under the command of His Excellency Lieutenant-general Knyphausen—Regiment du corps; regiment of Donop; 1st brigade British; two light twelve pounders; brigade of guards; one squadron 16th light dragoons; 5th and 27th regiments; two light twelves; 26th and 27th regiments; 3d brigade; two squadrons 17th light dragoons; hospital wagons; rum wagons; empty wagons; 2d battalion 71st regiment mounted chasseurs; one squadron 17th light dragoons; Queen's rangers on the right flank of the line of baggage.

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selected about 2400 of his best troops, and detached them from his cantonment at the Valley Forge, across the Schuylkill, under the command of the Marquis de la Fayette; a young nobleman, admired and beloved by the whole army, for his amiable disposition, his charming manners, great gallantry, and ardent attachment to the cause of the country. In addition to the motives assigned for this movement, it may, with plausibility at least, be added, that this detachment was instructed, without commitment, *to seal up* the intercourse between the city and the country, and to harass the enemy by such enterprises, as occasions might invite and discretion warrant. The Argus-eyed Mercury M'Lane, who had been sent into the state of Delaware to levy contributions of provisions in the course of the winter, having resumed his station on the lines of the enemy, between the Delaware and the Schuylkill, the Marquis, at four leagues distance, might have slept in security, against the *ruse de guerre* of the enemy, but he omitted no necessary precaution, and arriving at Barren Hill Church* on the morning of the 18th of May, he addressed the following letter to Captain M'Lane:

"*Woods near Barren Hill Church,*
"9 *o'clock A. M.* 18*th May*, 1778.

"Dear Sir,

"I have just now received your letter, and wish you would come down immediately, that I might speak to you of several things; inquire, if you please, if the people think there will be a market to-morrow? I wish also you would see if some man to be depended on, and of credit with the enemy, would undertake a visit to the city for twelve guineas. Is it known towards the British lines that a detachment has been ordered from our army?

"Your's,

"M. DE LA FAYETTE."

* See Atlas, No. XVIII.

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This note of the Marquis found Captain M'Lane near Germantown, who immediately waited on him at Barren Hill Church, and the necessary precautions were taken to prevent surprise; the advantage, therefore, obtained over the Marquis, may be accounted for on grounds little understood, which will acquit him of the want of caution, and will now be detailed. Proctor's regiment of artillery, originally levied by the state of Pennsylvania, had been transferred to the United States, and a re-organization taking place, it was the lot of a Lieutenant C.* to be excluded the service, who, in disgust, opened a correspondence with the enemy, and became a spy to Sir William Howe; and the better to fulfil his new engagement, he kept up his acquaintance with his former comrades, and frequently visited the cantonment of Valley Forge. To prevent the necessity of direct intercourse with Philadelphia, and thereby to avoid suspicion, this traitor had established a rendezvous in the Frankford creek with General Howe's messenger, where he used to deliver his communications; and it was by this channel the enemy were apprised of the Marquis's movement, almost as soon as he had reached Barren Hill Church.

On receiving the intelligence, Sir William Howe determined to make a vigorous effort to intercept the Marquis, for which purpose, General Grant, accompanied by Sir William Erskine, with 5000 select troops, was ordered, by a formed night march, to turn the Marquis's left and get into his rear, whilst General Grey, moving in concert by the Ridge road, was to take possession of the heights near the falls of Schuylkill, and prevent his escape by Levering's ford. A reference to the Diagram No. XVI. will exhibit these movements and the Marquis's position.

Captain M'Lane was on the alert, but could discover no indication of any movement of the enemy on the 18th, or before the night of the 19th; the British General, to

* Consideration for his family prevents the exposition of his name.

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mask his enterprise, having by double guards strictly interdicted all communication with the country; but the silence which ensued this precaution, caused our partisan to increase his vigilance. On the morning of the 19th, M'Lane was joined by Captain William Parr, of Morgan's rifle corps, an officer of distinguished bravery, with eighty men, and after night fall, as was his custom, he advanced towards the enemy's lines, his evening patrole having reported every thing quiet; but in crossing the country he fell in with a couple of the enemy's grenadiers at the three mile run, (Z) who pretended to be deserters, from whom he learned, that General Grant had marched at twilight, with the grenadiers and light infantry, on the Old York road, and that a body of Germans were getting ready to march up the Schuylkill. These combined movements left no doubt on his mind that the Marquis was their object, and he took his measures accordingly. Captain Parr was despatched across the country with the detachment by (*t*) to get possession of Wanderer's Hill, with orders to oppose the column of the enemy, which might advance on the ridge road, to the last extremity, and M'Lane in person pressed forward to the Marquis by the shortest route. (S)

General Grant had marched out of Philadelphia on the Germantown road, about eight o'clock, turned off at the rising sun, on the Old York road (*o, o,*) which he pursued to (X), where he wheeled short to his left, and fell into the Limekiln road, by which and the Church road, he proceeded to White Marsh, crossed the Wissahiccon, and again turning to his left, he reached Plymouth Meeting House at (*c,*) a little before sunrise, and halted at (*b,*) believing he had got the Marquis in a *cul de sac* at (*d,*) and that he had nothing more to do but spring the net. General Grant had marched under cover of night near twenty miles in nine hours, his troops of course must have been too much fatigued for a vigorous attack; but whether it was this circumstance which caused his halt, or whether he waited the approach of General Grey, who commanded the column in the Ridge road, and had

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much the shortest distance to march, I am unable to say; certain it is, however, that his halt favoured the Marquis's retreat.

I left M'Lean and Parr on the wing from the three mile run (Z) in (*s*) and (*t*;) the former reached Barren Hill about day break, and imparted his apprehensions to the Marquis, who could scarcely credit his report, when it was confirmed by Captain Parr's detachment, which had got possession of the heights above the falls of Schuylkill, in season to engage General Grey's column, and check its advance; and satisfactory information of Grant's movement reached him about the same moment from an opposite quarter, and I take pleasure in recording the instance of patriotic zeal. In passing White Marsh, the noise of the British column awoke a Captain Stone of the militia, an inhabitant, who, on making the discovery, jumped from a back window of his house, and ran naked across the country towards Barren Hill until exhausted, when his report was taken up and carried to the Marquis in the same manner by Richard Bartleston, who resided near the meeting house.

The Marquis now found his situation too exigent for deliberation, and therefore instantly determined to retire by Matson's ford on the Schuylkill, at (*d*,) which he fortunately effected in safety; but if General Grant, when he reached Plymouth Meeting house, had, without a halt, pushed forward two thousand men, with four pieces of artillery, to occupy the strong grounds at the ford, or those near Spring Mill at (*c*,) and had himself advanced to (*k*,) the American corps would have either fallen into his hands, or must have been dispersed, as he would have had every advantage of ground, with more than double force. On the contrary, if the Marquis had retired by his left in (*h*,) on what was called the Reading road, and fallen into the White Marsh road near (*l*,) he could not only have extricated his corps, but in his turn might have gained Grant's left flank and rear, and harassed him on his return to Philadelphia by Chesnut Hill and German-

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town, *l*, *m*, *m*, and this no doubt would have been his conduct, if the cautious instructions of the Commander in Chief, had permitted him to engage the flower of his army in manœuvres of some delicacy against threefold numbers. After communicating to the Marquis, M'Lane joined Captain Parr at Wanderer's Hill, and having amused the yagers in front of General Gray, to gain time for the Marquis, he crossed the Schuylkill at Levering's ford about (*t*,) and the General retraced his steps to Philadelphia.

In respect to the Marquis's conduct on this operation, it cannot be censured; the position he had taken at Barren Hill Church, is almost impracticable in front or flank, and he relied on the corps of observation, posted six or eight miles in advance, for information of the enemy's movements, who practised every means to elude the vigilance of Captain M'Lane; yet, although they had much in their power, they could not escape him; for if he had not fallen in with the grenadiers at (Z), he would have obtained information of Grant's movement a few minutes after at the Rising Sun.

It is ten miles from Barren Hill Church to Valley Forge, of course the Marquis was in safety, before it could be known at Head Quarters that he had been exposed; but the peril he had escaped produced a lively sensation throughout the army, even after it had ceased, and the following testimonials shew the estimation in which M'Lane's services were held at Head Quarters on that occasion

"*Camp Valley Forge, May* 20, 1778

"Dear Captain,

"I am happy you have, with your brave little party, conducted with so much honour to yourself. The Marquis effected, owing to your vigilance, a glorious retreat, as well as a difficult one. One of the British prisoners you sent under guard pretends that he is a deserter; I wish you would inform me the particulars of the prisoners

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being taken. The Hessians' horses and accoutrements shall be appraised and paid for by the Quarter Master General.

"Your very humble servant,
"ALEX. SCAMMELL, *Adj. Gen.*"

"*Camp Valley Forge, 23d May,* 1778.

"Dear Captain,

"I am proud to hear you are still doing something to distinguish yourself in the eyes of your country. I have the pleasure to inform you, that your conduct with the Marquis has been very pleasing to His Excellency and the whole army.

"I am your obedient servant,
"CHARLES SCOTT, *Brig. Gen.*
"*and officer of the day.*"

A few days after the affair of Barren Hill, Captain M'Lane fell in with Lieutenant C. on the lines, under circumstances of such strong suspicion, that he placed him under guard, and was sending him to Head Quarters in charge of Lieutenant Claypoole; but C. by his reasoning and protestations of innocence, lulled the suspicions of his conductor, who insensibly fell some distance in rear of his escort, when C. being much more athletic, turned suddenly on him, seized his sword, wrested it from him, and making him prisoner, changed their route towards Philadelphia. After recovering his astonishment, Claypoole, made desperate by his situation, determined to release himself at every hazard! He attacked C. but was overpowered, desperately wounded, and left on the ground. The traitor escaped, and has not since been heard of. Lieutenant Claypoole, whom I knew personally, recovered his wounds, and is, I believe, living at present in Philadelphia. The following letter from the Adjutant-general refers to this incident.

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"Dear Captain,

"I am much obliged by the information of last night. The bearer, Mr. St. Clair, has been a Lieutenant in foreign service; he comes to join your party as a volunteer; he bears a good character, appears very sensible, and I believe will be ambitious to distinguish himself. I lament poor Claypoole's fate, but hope he is not mortally wounded; I wish you may escape the snares of the enemy; sure I am they will endeavour by all possible methods to catch you. I have ordered Major Minger to send you an officer in Claypoole's place from the German battalion, who is well acquainted with the country, and who, I expect, will join you to-morrow.

"I am sincerely your's,

"ALEX. SCAMMELL, *Adj. Gen.*"

Before we leave the neighbourhood of Philadelphia, I must record an anecdote of this partizan, which, for audacity and presence of mind, has been seldom equalled, and cannot be surpassed, nor should it be forgotten.*

On the 6th of June, 1778, after day break, Captain M'Lane, with two dragoons, was moving on the Bustletown road towards Frankford, and near that village fell into an ambuscade of infantry, who fired on him, and forced him into the field on the right towards the Oxford road, where he discovered a party of British dragoons galloping towards him. To silence the fire of the infantry, he placed himself between them and the dragoons, and approached the latter until within twenty paces, when he suddenly wheeled to the right, passed them, and gained the Oxford road. Two dragoons were detached in pursuit of him, and, to escape them, he turned off the road to his left, and pushed for a branch in his front, which he crossed, and was ascending the opposite height, when the dragoons came up on his right and left, and believing he had surrendered, dropped their swords to

* I understand there is a drawing of this rencontre in Mr. Peale's Museum at Philadelphia.

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the straps. M'Lane had a pistol in his right hand, with which he fired into the right breast of the dragoon on his left, who fell; he at the same time seized the tassel of the dragoon's sword on his right, and struck him with his pistol a back-handed blow across his nose, which he repeated, until he disabled and brought him to the pummel of his saddle, and then rode off with a wound on his left hand, which he received as the dragoon attempted to draw his sword, the tassel of which he had seized. On this occasion, the Marquis de la Fayette wrote him the following letter:

"*Valley Forge, 12th June*, 1778.

"Dear Sir,

"I have received your's concerning the Indians, and will mention your desire to His Excellency, and make no doubt but that he will send them to join you, as soon as the enemy take up their intended march through the Jerseys; the Indians will do well with you in the pines; I give you joy for your escape from the British ambuscade, and the cleverness with which you have dispatched the Mr. English dragoons; I have felt great pleasure in hearing that your wound is a slight one.

"With the most sincere esteem and attachment,

"I have the honour to be,

"Dear Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"LA FAYETTE."

As the period of the evacuation of Philadelphia approached, M'Lane was directed by the General to quicken his vigilance, and so close was he on the rear of the enemy, which crossed the Delaware at Gloucester point, that he made prisoners of one captain, one provost-marshal, three sergeants, two corporals, and thirty-four privates; on which occasion he received the congratulations of General Washington.

The details of this veteran's combats, skirmishes, and adventures are so numerous, as well by sea as by land;

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they are so complicated and various, and so interwoven with the military operations immediately under General Washington's orders, that they would furnish interesting matter for the historian, and I shall at some future day give them to the public. He was engaged, and had men actually killed around him, at the battle of Long Island, and every successive action in which General Washington commanded, from that of the White Plains to the capture of Cornwallis at York, yet never rose to a higher grade than that of Major; but, according to the rule introduced by President Madison and his Counsellors, M'Lane fought enough to have been made a Field Marshal. How melancholy is the contrast between the disinterested patriotism, the integrity, and economy of that day, compared with the pageantry, profligacy, extravagance, venality, and corruption of the present. But I will dismiss these painful reflections, and invite the attention of the reader with the recital of Major M'Lane's last enterprise, under the orders of General Washington.

The extraordinary circumstances attending the occurrence I am about to relate, are probably better known to the Honourable Judge Peters, of Bellemont, near Philadelphia, than any other person, because he long presided at the board of war, with distinguished advantage to his country, and conspicuous honour to himself; and was, I believe, on that station at the period of which I am writing. I shall, however, give the facts as I have received them. In September, 1781, Captain M'Lane, pursuant to orders received from the War office, passed from Philadelphia to Mount Holley in New Jersey, where he fell in with a stranger who had been previously described to him, to whom he made himself known, and from thence proceeded in company with him to South river near Shrewsbury, where, agreeably to direction, he found a whale boat and crew subject to his orders, in which he embarked with his companion, and, under cover of the night pushing out to sea, gave Sandy Hook, where a British squadron lay at the time, a good birth; then

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hauled in with Long Island, and landed at Gowan's cove, where he lay concealed with his crew, whilst his companion absented himself a few hours, and returned with the private naval signals of the enemy, which the Captain understood had been procured by James Rivington. The night following, the party again embarked in their boat, and returned to South river, from whence M'Lane proceeded with the signals to Philadelphia, which he was ordered to convey to the Chesapeake, and deliver to the French Admiral the Count de Grasse, who lay in Lynnhaven bay with his fleet.

Lord Cornwallis surrendered to General Washington the 19th October, 1781, and on the 24th Sir H. Clinton appeared off the Chesapeake with the British fleet, consisting of twenty-five sail of the line and a reinforcement of 7000 men, to relieve his Lordship. But Count de Grasse, being ignorant of the actual strength of the enemy, declined seeking an action with him, and to remove this difficulty, it was necessary to ascertain the British force; and such was the singular aptitude of M'Lane for every species of military service, such his extraordinary enterprise and discernment, as well by sea as land; and such the boundless confidence of General Washington, that he was selected on this occasion to reconnoitre the British fleet; as will appear from the following letter of the Commander in Chief and the passport of the Count de Grasse.

"To Major M'Lane,

"Sir,

"I request that you will proceed with all possible expedition in your boat to the capes, and reconnoitre as nearly as is consistent with your safety, the British fleet, in order to ascertain their strength and disposition, and particularly whether they have any transports under convoy.

"If circumstances should make it more desirable to make your observations from the shore, you will apply

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to any militia officers, and request their assistance, either for your personal safety and accomplishing your object, or for transmitting intelligence to me. You will likewise communicate such discoveries to Count de Grasse as you think deserve his attention.*

"GO: WASHINGTON.

"*Given at Head Quarters, the 29th Oct.* 1781."

"Il est ordonne a tous battiments Francois actuallement dans le baye de Chesapeake, de ne donner aucum depechment, a la commission de Mons. Mac Lane et de lui a donner tout assistance sous tout fois montre et a reveler de sa mission.

"LE COMTE DE GRASSE.

"*On bord la Ville de Paris, 30th Oct.* 1781."

After four pitched battles under General Washington, eight heavy attacks, including Trenton, Princeton, Germantown, Stoney Point, and Paulus Hook; eighteen brisk skirmishes, numerous affairs of pickets, and one sea fight, as Captain of marines, on board the Congress, in which the British sloop of war Savage, Captain Stirling, was taken; this revolutionary soldier, having spent his patrimony in the service of his country, retired to the bosom of his fellow citizens, content with the result of his perils, sufferings, and sacrifices, for which he was rewarded by an approving conscience, the patronage of Presidents Washington and Jefferson, and the following credentials from the hand of the first man of the world:

"Allen M'Lane, Esquire, was appointed a Captain in one of the additional continental regiments of foot in January, 1777, and by his activity and industry, soon joined the army with a full company. He commanded a party of observation, under my instructions, until July,

* The Major executed this service to admiration, contriving by his signals to intermingle with the British fleet, and returned in safety with a satisfactory report; yet the gallant De Grasse declined to seek the action, and was afterwards defeated by Admiral Rodney in the West Indies, and was taken in the Ville de Paris.

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1779, when he was annexed by a resolution of the Honourable Continental Congress, to Major Lee's legion, to command the dismounted. From the certificates of which Major M'Lane is possessed, it appears, that he was very early active in the cause of his country; and from the time of his joining the continental army, I can testify that he distinguished himself highly as a brave and enterprising officer.

"Previous to the siege of York, he was employed to watch the movements of the British army, at or near New York, as well as in Virginia, and he was intrusted with despatches of the first importance to His Excellency Count de Grasse, which commission he executed with great celerity, and was afterwards very serviceable in reconnoitring and bringing intelligence of the strength and disposition of the British army.

"Given under my hand and seal, at Rocky Hill, near Princeton, Nov. 4th, 1792.

(Signed) "GO: WASHINGTON."

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CHAPTER XIX.

A rapid Sketch of the Battle of Breed's Hill.

On the augmentation of his force in May, 1775, General Gage determined to occupy the heights of Dorchester to the south of Boston, and those of Charlestown on the north of the town; the occupation of these points was not only necessary to the extension of his quarters, but indispensible to his holding possession of them. It was therefore determined in the first instance, to seize upon Dorchester heights, as they were the most commanding, and of easiest access to the Provincials. Preparations were accordingly made, and agreeably to the plan concerted, Major-general Howe was to have landed at the point of the peninsula nearest the castle; Major-general Clinton on the flat between that place and Nook's Hill, whilst Major-general Burgoyne was to take post on the neck, and amuse the Provincials at Roxbury with a heavy cannonade; and from the strength, disposition, and equipments of those corps at that period, no effectual opposition could have been made to this operation of the royal army; and a few days more would have put it in possession of Bunker's Hill also.

The arrangements of General Gage, preparatory to those meditated operations, necessarily attracted the observation of the inhabitants of Boston, and being communicated to the Provincial Congress, they became jealous of some hostile movement, without being able to penetrate the object of it. It appears probable that under this impression, they recommended to a council of war, which had been instituted, the fortification of Dorchester neck and Bunker's Hill, on the ground of *precautionary defence*, the very same motive by which the council of

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British officers had been actuated; for if the views of the provincial Congress had been offensive, the heights of Dorchester could not have escaped their attention, because from thence both the town and harbour were exposed to annoyance.

The resolution of the provincial council of war being taken, Colonel Prescott, a man of strong mind and dauntless resolution, who I understand had served in the seven years' war as a provincial subaltern, seconded by a Colonel Brewer, who also served in the same war as a sergeant of rangers, was ordered with one thousand Massachusetts men, to take possession of Bunker's Hill; but whether by mistaking the spot, which seems improbable, or from the desire to take a position within offensive distance of General Gage, Colonel Prescott passed the crown of Bunker's Hill about 600 yards, and broke ground on Breed's Hill, about 1200 yards from the British battery, on Cop's hill in North Boston; he there projected a regular square, as well as I recollect,* of fifty yards, without a flanking angle, the front of which, towards Boston, ranged about N. E. and S. W. with the entrance or aperture in the centre of the opposite side; a parapet breast high had been thrown up, and a *retrenchment*, from the N. E. angle of the ditch in front, had been pushed about 100 yards down the declivity towards Mystic river, with the apparent design of continuing it across a hollow or indenture of the surface, to the bank of that river: from the N. E. angle of the redoubt, in rear, a post and rail fence, ranging with the N. E. side of the redoubt, ran back about 200 yards, where it was intersected nearly at right angles by a similar fence, extended about 300 yards to the bank of Mystic river, which at the junction was 8 or 9 feet perpendicular height: in front of the last line of fence from the bank of the Mystic river, the ground was smooth, without obstruction, and declined gently 60 or 80 yards, where it fell off abruptly.

* I examined it the 17th March, 1776, the day the enemy evacuated Boston.

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The bank of the Mystic river appeared firm and flat. These details are given from memoranda taken hastily, almost forty-one years since, and therefore I crave consideration, should they be in any particular imperfect.

This rectangular work of Colonel Prescott was so far advanced, that his men were pretty well covered in the ditch and retrenchment, and behind the parapet, before he was discovered in the morning, although the Lively frigate lay immediately before him in the ferry way between Charlestown and Boston, and a ship of the line, with the Falcon sloop of war, a few hundred yards to the eastward. The batteries of these vessels, and several gun boats, with that at Cop's Hill, were opened against the Provincials as soon as they were discovered, and the cannonade was continued without cessation; but, from the elevation of the hill, with so little effect, that the Americans continued their work.

The British General was startled by this encroachment, which left him no time to deliberate; for although Bunker's Hill could have given little annoyance to Boston, Breed's Hill positively commanded the northern part of it. Major-general Howe, therefore, being first for duty, was ordered with ten companies of grenadiers, and ten of light infantry, and the 5th, 38th, 43d, and 52d regiments, to dislodge the Provincials; and on this service, seconded by Brigadier-general Pigot, he embarked in barges about noon, and rowed to Moreton's point, the eastern extremity of the peninsula of Charlestown, and the present site of the navy yard of the United States, where he landed and formed without opposition; but disliking the disposition and aspect of the Provincials, he ordered his troops to sit down, and sent back to Boston for a reinforcement, to land and co-operate from the side of Charleston; for which service the 47th regiment and 1st battalion of marines were detached; and yet this corps of Sir William Howe, composed of five regiments, one battalion, and twenty flank companies, has been generally reported at *about* 2000 men; but surely sixty-four companies, at least,

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cannot be reckoned far less than 3000 men, and this number I shall claim, for the honour of Prescott and Stark, and the yeomanry of Massachusetts and New-Hampshire, who, I have been assured by several spectators of the action, were the only troops engaged, and that their whole number did not exceed 1500 combatants.

General Howe halted at Moreton's point, as well to arrange and refresh his corps for combat, as to wait the reinforcement; being perfectly concealed from observation in his front by the nature of the ground. Prescott, at the same time, manned his redoubt, and the retrenchment, and occupied the circumjacent ground in the most advantageous manner he could, with about 800 men out of the thousand ordered for the service; whilst General Putnam and a Colonel Gerrish took post with about 1500 men, on and around Bunker's Hill. In the mean time, Colonel Stark, with his own regiment and that of Reed from New Hampshire, amounting to about 700 men, half organized,* and wretchedly equipped,† were pressing forward for the scene of action; Captain H. Dearborn, (lately a Major-general, and turned out of service by the good President Madison, to make room for his favourites Brown and Scott,) marched on Colonel Stark's right, traversed the causeway under a heavy cross fire from floating batteries, and passed General Putnam on

* The men hastily chose their company officers, but Stark had for his Major Andrew M'Clary, Esq. who had distinguished himself for his resolution, zeal and patriotism, in planning and leading the attack of the Castle at Portsmouth, the 1st December, 1774, and seizing the ordnance, arms, and military stores found therein; he had this day discharged his duty with great gallantry in the field, and escaped unhurt, but returning to bring off some men scattered in the rear, he was killed by a cannon ball from one of the enemy's floating batteries near the neck.

† The men were armed with fusils of various calibres, each individual was furnished one quarter of a pound of powder in a horn, one flint, and lead sufficient to make fifteen charges either of ball or buckshot; the men prepared their ammunition according to their discretion, some with cartridges and others with loose ammunition; the powder in their horns and the lead in their pockets.

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Bunker's Hill, with Colonel Gerrish by his side, and 1000 or 1200 men under their orders; as this corps of citizen soldiers approached the redoubt under the cannonade of the enemy's batteries, from Charles River and Cop's Hill, Colonel Stark determined to form his men behind the post and rail fences before described; but when he reached the bank of the Mystic, he cast his eyes down upon the beach, and, as he observed to me on the spot, thought it was so plain a way that the enemy could not miss it; he therefore ordered a number of *his boys* to jump down the bank, and with stones from the adjacent walls, they soon threw up a strong breastwork to the water's edge, behind which he posted triple ranks of his choice men; in the mean time, those who were formed in rear of the fences, to conceal themselves from the enemy, filled the space between the rails with grass and hay, behind which they either knelt or sat down, every man having made an aperture in the grassy rampart, through which, whilst resting his fusee, he could take deliberate aim. Captain Dearborn was posted with his company nearest to the redoubt on the right of Stark's line.

About one o'clock General Howe put two columns and a detachment with his artillery in motion; one column marched by the beach, and his light infantry led the other on the margin of the bank of Mystic, and directly to the left of Colonel Stark's line; the detachment and artillery, from the best information I have been able to procure, inclined towards his left, and commenced a feeble attack against the redoubt at long shot, apparently with a design to draw the attention of Colonel Prescott, whilst the column on the beach, and that on the bank of the Mystic, were destined to turn the flank and gain the rear of the Provincials on Breed's Hill, which they would have accomplished, if they had not been driven back. Colonel Stark's orders to his men, who were concealed behind the stone wall on the beach, were not to fire until the front of the enemy reached a point which he had marked in the bank, at eight or ten rods distance, and

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those on the bank immediately under his eye, were directed to reserve their fire, until they could see the enemy's half gaiters, which, from the form of the ground, would bring them within the same distance: in this situation of the provincials, the columns of the enemy on the beach and the bank advanced by heavy platoons, without firing, as if not apprised of what awaited them, and when within the prescribed distance, received a volley which mowed down the whole front ranks, and the columns were instantly broken and fell back in disorder, that on the beach, entirely out of the combat, having ninety-six* men killed outright, before they could escape the American fire; on the bank the light infantry fell back until covered by the ground, then reformed, and again advanced to the attack, and were again repulsed with similar slaughter; three times were these brave unfortunate men led to the charge, and were finally repulsed.† Sir William Howe now gave up his first plan of attack, to force his way into the rear of the provincials, and making an entire new disposition, he directed his whole force against the redoubt, attacking it on three sides at the same time. General Clinton, with the 47th regiment and the battalion of marines on the right; General Pigott, with the 5th, 38th, and 43d regiments, in the centre; and the Commander, with the grenadiers and 52d regiment on the left; the light infantry appear to have been put *hors de combat*. The retrenchment was turned on the left and entered by the grenadiers, but being exposed to the perpendicular fire of the redoubt and the oblique fire of Captain Dearborn, they were obliged to abandon it.

* Mr. John Winslow, then in Boston, I understand, counted this number the next day. This gentleman served with much reputation in the artillery of the revolution, and was at the capture of Burgoyne, and has been long since a Major-general in the militia of Massachusetts.

† I had these details from Colonel Stark on the field, the 17th of March, 1776, and I remember his observing, "*the dead lay as thick as sheep in a fold;*" it was at this point the enemy suffered most severely.

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Assailed in his front and flanks by three-fold numbers, Prescott persevered with great obstinacy and valour, until his ammunition was nearly expended, and the redoubt was forced by the grenadiers at the angle, which joined the retrenchment. He was then obliged to give way, and his men of course retreated in disorder. After the third repulse of the light infantry, and whilst the attack was carried against the redoubt, Stark's men behind the post and rail fence near the Mystic, were unassailed and unoccupied, and the scenes near the redoubt being obscured by the smoke, they were induced to retreat reluctantly after the work was carried. If they had been thrown forward, where the light infantry finally gave way, to attack Sir William's right flank and rear, the issue of this conflict might have proved unfortunate for him; or if General Putnam had moved up with Colonel Gerrish and the men who remained stationary within 600 yards of the combat, which lasted an hour and an half, the triumph of the provincials would have been decisive, and those of the British corps who were not killed must have surrendered, which would probably have terminated the contest, and prevented the disseverment of the British empire; but I understand from high authority, that it was in vain Colonel Prescott sent messenger after messenger to entreat General Putnam to come to his succour; he rode about Bunker's Hill, while the battle raged under his eye, with a number of intrenching tools slung across his horse, but did not advance a step, and was passed, with Colonel Gerrish still at his side, by Stark and Dearborn as they retreated, near the spot where they saw him when they advanced; and for this conduct Colonel Prescott never ceased to reprobate the General.

In respect to the patriot, Doctor Warren, whose acknowledged talents and virtues, and zeal and devotion to the cause of his country, have consecrated his memory to endless time, he arrived at the redoubt a short time before the action commenced, and on his appearance be-

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ing known as a general officer recently appointed, the gallant Prescott addressed himself to him, and demanded, "Doctor Warren, do you come here to take the command?" "No, Colonel," replied the Doctor, "but to give what assistance I can, and to let these damned rascals see," pointing to the British troops, "that the Yankees will fight."* I understand he performed his duty with his firelock, and it is certain he fell in the retreat, in rear of, and a little to the right of the redoubt, it is said, by a random shot through the head.

The sanguinary merits of this combat would not disgrace Chippewa or Bridgewater; but in this one case the liberties of North America formed the ground of contest, whilst in the other, military eclat and individual exaltation were alone contended for. The loss of the provincials were 453, all ranks included, among whom, Doctor Warren, Colonel Gardner, Lieutenant-colonel Parker, Major M'Clary, and Major Moore, were the only characters of distinction. The loss of the British of all ranks was 1054, of whom 19 commissioned officers were killed, and among them one Lieutenant-colonel, two Majors, and seven Captains; and 70 were wounded. Such were the immediate fruits of this battle, but its effects were coextensive with the American war, leaving impressions on the minds of the British commanders which saved the country from great loss of blood and heavy calamities. This isolated sketch being intended as a mere record of facts little known, it may be proper to state, that between Prescott and Stark there was no preconcert or plan of co-operation; each fought his distinct corps, and defended his ground, according to his own judgment, and there was no general command exercised on the field; as soon as the men were stationed, every one reasoned and resolved for himself, and fought for his country, under the direction of his own will; and the consequences shew what cannot be denied, that one deli-

* This fact is taken from the lips of Doctor Eustis, our minister at the Hague, who was present in the redoubt.

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berate well directed shot, is worth an hundred and twenty thrown away by platoons or file firing, in the ordinary hurry of military actions, *particularly under the shade of night, and at 600 yards distance.* General Ward, the Commander in Chief, listened to the thunder of the battle from his quarters at Cambridge; and all the reinforcements which arrived at Bunker's Hill, after Colonel Stark had passed, halted and kept company with General Putnam and Colonel Gerrish. The Colonel was cashiered, but the General, being distinguished for his popularity, his integrity, and patriotism, served as third in command at the termination of the American revolution.

The habits and feelings of our countrymen at the commencement of the revolution have been described in the beginning of this volume, and when contrasted with those of the present day, they will receive a favourable award from every virtuous and reflecting citizen; while the youth of the present day, whether reared in military academies or metropolitan schools, though they may be taught to call ambition virtue, will find among their predecessors examples worthy of any age or nation, in which ambition was united with the sentiment of love of country and inseparable from social virtue.

Those, then, who desire to stifle in the rising generation, that Godlike sensibility, which weeps over the sufferings of a fellow creature, or to impair the force of the divine injunction which teaches man "to do as he would be done by," instead of instructing his son in the civil arts and useful sciences, should encourage military academies, and teach them how to wield the sabre or to set the squadron, and

"To know the hardships of a lengthened war,
"What treasures it must cost, what scenes of blood,
"What vast expenses, what unnumbered toils
"Equipping fleets and mustering armies ask."

The following animated description of the battle of

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Breed's Hill and its attendant horrors, from the pen of one of the most elegant scholars and accomplished gentlemen of his day,* will exhibit to the people of these states, the barbarian influence of military education and habits on the human mind, and will shew them how men accustomed to scenes of horror and distress, may be charmed by the savage sublimity of blazing towns and bleeding hosts, to the dissolution of the first duties and obligations of intelligent social beings, and the extinction of the endearing and consoling virtues of humanity, and religion.

"And now ensued one of the greatest scenes of war that can be conceived; if we look to the height, Howe's corps ascending the hill in the face of intrenchments, and in a very disadvantageous ground, were much engaged; to the left the enemy pouring in fresh troops by thousands over the land; and in the arm of the sea our ships and floating batteries cannonading them; straight before us a large and noble town, in one great blaze; the church steeples and heights of our own camp covered with spectators of the rest of the army, which was not engaged; the hills round the country covered with spectators; the enemy all in anxious suspense; and the roar of cannon, mortars, and musketry; the crash of churches, ships upon the stocks, and whole streets falling together in ruins, to fill the ear; the storm of the redoubts, with the objects above described, to fill the eye; and the reflection that perhaps a defeat was a final loss of the British empire in America, to fill the mind, made the whole picture a complication of horror and importance beyond any thing that ever came to my lot to witness."

* General Burgoyne.

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respect of the world; my humble suffrage could add nothing to the fame of General Washington, after he has merited the plaudits of mankind, by the rare example of a military chief, who, having led the armies of his country, to the establishment of her independence, peaceably and proudly laid down his arms, and sought his reward in the bosom of his fellow citizens. But I will gratify the reader with a *fac simile* of the heads of General Washington's first *official* letter, dated at Cambridge, July 10th, 1775, to the President of Congress, which will perpetuate the character of his manuscript, and record the extent and accuracy of his knowledge, in all the variety of military details, a subject little understood in this country at that period, and of which his own opportunities for correct information had been superficial. The comprehension and correctness of his military views, under those circumstances, must excite the admiration of every competent judge, and I do conceive clearly demonstrate, that whatever may have been the force and energy of his mind, when directed to other subjects, military affairs were undoubtedly his *fort*. The letter amplifying the topics comprised in these heads was written by Colonel Joseph Reed, then his Secretary, and afterwards Governor of Pennsylvania, the original rough draft of which is in my possession, and the published copy will be found in the first volume of Washington's letters, *Boston Edition*. 1795, *page 8th*.

END OF VOL. I.

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[A] *Abstract of a General Return of the Troops under the Command of Major-general St. Clair.*

Ticonderoga, June 28th, 1777.	m	*Rank and File.*					
REGIMENTS.		Present fit for duty.	Sick present.	Sick absent.	On command.	On furlough.	Total.
Marshall's	1	126	36	4	123	3	292
Hale's	5	212	58	2	87		360
Bradford's	0	265	17		51		333
Scammel's	5	153	71	12	126	1	363
Cilley's	2	193	88	2	113		396
Jackson's	3	45	11	7	22		85
Brewer's	0	144	15	1	92		252
Francis's	3	206	49	4	161		420
Warner's	0	99	25	1	48		173
Long's	1	91	38		25		154
Leonard's militia	7	192	65	2	22		279
Well's militia	8	197	44	4	64		309
Whitcomb's Rangers	3	19	14		2		35
Lee's Rangers		23					23
Baldwin's Artificers, &c.		124	3		1	2	130
	T	2089	532	39	937	6	3604

Ticonderoga,	*Matrosses.*					
	duty.	Sick present.	Sick absent.	On command.	On furlough.	Total.
Established A	51	8	3	3		200
Temporary de	99	1				38
Carriage-make	33	5				
	83	16	3	3		238

NSON, *Dep. Adjt. Gen.*

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Ten Broeck, Esq. is Brigadier-general.

ficers.		*Non Com.*		*Rank and File.*					
Chaplains.	Surgeons.	Sergeants.	Drums & Fifes	Privates fit for duty.	Sick present.	On command.	On furlough.	Wagons.	Total.
	1	13		62					62
		16	2	113	7	10			132
		10	4	69					69
		9	5	75	15				90
		9	2	42					42
		16	6	123	21		7		151
	1	11	4	106	3				109
		4		36					36
		22	7	210	13				223
		12	6	100					100
		10	2	62					62
		5	3	108	10				118
		20	6	145	5				150
		12	2	97					97
		6	4	50	7				57
	1	32	4	225	32				257
	3	207	57	1625	113	10	7		1755

Loudon's Ferry, Mohawk River, Sept. 3d, 1777. *Rank and File.*

COMPANIES.	Mendam.	Sick at Princeton.	Sick at Bound brook.	Sick at Albany.	Dead.	Deserted.	Wounded absent.	Sent to former regts.	On command.	Absent with leave.	Total.
Captain Cabell's				2							70
Posey's	1			2							55
Knox's		4									54
Long's			1			1					64
Swearingen's	4			6				4			87
Paar's				2		1					39
Boone's			1		1	4		18	2		63
Henderson's						4					76
Total	5	4	2	12	2	9		22	2		508

N. B. One of Captain Posey's of Captain Long's lieutenants on command; two of Captain Swearingen's sent with leave, and both his lieutenants sick absent; Captain Boone wounded, k absent.

DANIEL MORGAN, *Colonel.*

Of these eight captains, Pose in the attack of Stoney Point; and afterwards by his dauntless resolution contr ved together as brigadiers, in 1793-4; and he was recently governor of the Ind

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[D] *A Return of the Killed of Major-general Gates, between*

	REGIMENTS.	Total	MISSING. Officers. Colonels.	Lt. Colonels.	Majors.	Captains.	1st Lieuts.	2d Lieuts.	Ensigns.	N. C. officers, mus. & priv. N. C. officers.	Musicians.	Privates.	Total.	Killed, wounded, and missing.
Colonel Morgan's command.	Col. Morgan's Riflem	9												
	Major Dearborn's lig	22								3			3	
														59
General Poor's Brigade.	Cilley's	46				1	1			1		9	12	
	Hale's	24								1		2	3	
	Scammel's	17										4	4	
	Van Courtlandt's	21								1			1	
	H. Livingston's	7										1	1	
	Cook's M. C.	39										3	3	
	Latimer's M. C.	9										2	2	
														217
General Learned's Brigade.	Bailey's	8								1		3	4	
	J. Livingston's	1										4	4	
	Weston's	4										1	1	
	Jackson's	3												
														35
Gen. Patterson's Brig.	Marshall's	8												10
	Total	218				1	1			7		29	38	321

Sept. 21st, 1777.

WILKINSON, *Dep. Adjt. Gen.*

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INUED.

illed, Wounded and Missing.

COR	MISSING.		REMARKS.
nk.	*Names.*	*Rank.*	
Col. Cilley's ain	Jason Watts	Captain	Of the non-commissioned, musicians and privates returned missing, fifteen were killed.
ieut.	John Moore	1st Lieut.	
ieut.			
Col. Hale's d ieut.			
ain			
Col. Scamme ieut.			
gn			* After his report in the morning, on hearing the fire, he recrossed the river, and joined his regiment.
Col. Courtlan ieut.			
ieut.			
Col. Livingst ain			
Col. Cook's d ain			
ain			
t.			
t.			
Col. Latimore t.			
Col. Bailey's			One private taken.
Col. J. Living			
Col. Weston's			† A French gentleman volunteer.
ieut.			
Col. Jackson's ieut.			
Col. Morgan's gn			
Major Dearbo ain			‡ Taken prisoner, and afterwards exchanged for Captain A. Fraser.

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[E] *A General Major-general Horatio Gates,*

Behmus's Heights, Oct. 4	*Rank and File*						
CONTINENTAL BRIGADES AND CORPS.	Drums & Fifes	Present fit for duty	Sick present.	Sick absent.	On command.	On furlough.	Total.
Artillery -	7	309	8	23	16	4	360
Nixon's brigade -	53	854	138	297	139	2	1430
Poor's do. -	56	831	126	324	183	2	1466
Glover's do. -	50	918	147	242	171	1	1479
Patterson's do. -	46	732	92	226	244	6	1300
Learned's do. -	57	814	102	167	173	1	1257
Morgan's corps -		477	65	162	7	1	712
Baldwin's Engineers & Artificers		63	2		7		72
	9	4998	680	1441	940	17	8076
MILITIA.							
Warner's brigade	3	1027	104	44	196		1372
Woolcott's -	8	227					227
Schuyler's - -	7	832	101				933
Aggr	0	7084	885	1485	1136	17	10607

N. B. 1 commissary of ne following militia officers, non-commissioned officers and 4nels, 5 lieutenant-colonels, 8 majors, 52 captains, 45 first li-nrs, 6 surgeons, 5 mates, 294 sergeants, 44 drums and fifes, enoops, and 4751 militia to defend General Gates's camp.

Col. & Dep. Adjt. Gen.

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[G] *Return of the* *ajor-general Brown, at the Battle of*

NAMES OF CORPS.			MISSING.						REMARKS.
	Musicians.	Rank & File.	Brig. Majors.	Captains.	Subalterns	Sergeants.	Musicians.	Rank & File.	
General Staff			1						*Capt. Spencer, since dead of his wounds.
Light Dragoons		2							
Artillery -	1	30						1	
1st regt. Infantry		18						2	
*9th do. -		74			1	3		11	
*11th do. -	1	85			1			2	
21st do -		63						19	
*22d do. -	1	73			3	2		12	
23d do. -		44				3		24	
*25th do. -		56				1		14	
Canadian Volunteers		2						8	
Pennsylvania do.		21		1					
New York do.		10			1				
Total	3	478	1	1	6	9		93	

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APPENDIX.

No. I.

ROBERT SKINNER'S* WILL.

I, Robert Skinner of Calvert county merchant, at present in some good measure of health, but perfect in understanding, praise be given to the Almighty God, considering the brevity of man's life, and how uncertain my time is here, for the which cause and for divers other causes and considerations moving me hereunto, I judge it fit and convenient to make this my last will and testament, in opposition to all former wills whatsoever, in manner and form following:

I commit my body to the earth from whence it came, to be orderly and decently buried, according to the discretion of my wife, and others who are concerned; and for that estate which it hath pleased God to endow me with in this world, (my just debts and funeral expenses discharged,) I dispose of in manner and form as followeth:

Item,—I give and bequeath unto my eldest son, Robert Skinner, all my plantation and tract of land called Ireland Neck, which at this time is unsold or disposed of to him, his heirs and assigns for ever, also I give unto him the bed on which he now lieth, with the furniture thereunto belonging, with one manscote chair, with half of my carpenter's, joiner's and turner's tools, one pewter dish, with a large concordance of the bible, as also a joined table which is now at Ireland Neck.

Item,—I give unto my daughter, M. Cary Letchworth, one suit of child's bed linen, one manscote cradle, one child's chair, and one book being Slater's Exposition upon the two Epistles of the Thessalonians. Item,—I give unto my aforesaid daughter's first child, be it son or daughter, when it shall live to the age of one year, a cow calf one year old, provided that the father fetch it away within one half year after, and record it for the child, with the increase both male and female.

Item,—I give unto my second son, Clarke Skinner, to him, his heirs, and assigns for ever, one tract of land called the Border, joining upon that which I live upon, with all that part or tract of land called the Reserve, upon which I now live, lying to the west of a certain great branch, which expires in that which was formerly called my calf pasture, at the head of which there is a parcel of alders growing; and further, I give unto my said son Clarke, one piece of land lying westward of that aforenamed branch, being part of a tract of land called the Scraps, and further I give unto him one cow and one cow calf, as an addition to one heifer he hath already, and further I give to my son Clarke half of my joiner's and carpenter's and turner's tools, with my large bible in folio and one of M'Cane's bibles.

Item,—I give unto my third son, William Skinner, to him, his heirs, and assigns for ever, all that tract of land lying on the west side of Patuxent river,

* The great grandfather of Jas. Wilkinson's grandmother, ex parte paterna.

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joining on the Quosquo manor called the Hatchett, and one of M'Cane's bibles, with Bishop Usher's Sum and Substance of the Christian Religion. Item,—I give unto my younger son, Adderton Skinner, all that part of the tract of land called the Reserve, lying to the east of the aforenamed branch, to him, his heirs, and assigns for ever, together with that part of my land called the Scraps, lying to the east of the said branch joining to that of the Reserve.

Item,—I give unto my said son, one of M'Cane's bibles, with one book called the Christian Dictionary. Item,—I give unto my dear wife, Ann Skinner, upon the conditions following, all my personal estate undisposed of, viz. all debts, household goods and cattle, with all that may be called mine; my will and pleasure is, that my wife, in consideration of the premises abovementioned, shall give unto my three sons, Clarke Skinner, William Skinner, and Adderton Skinner, to each and every one of them, three able sufficient men servants, for time and term they come in for, not any one under four years; two to be deliverd to each of them when they shall attain the age of twenty years, and to every of them one more when they shall come to the age of twenty-two years; and secondly, my will and pleasure is, that the cattle that are now reputed my children's, with all their female increase at my decease, shall remain good to them, together with all the male increase from thenceforward; and thirdly, my will and pleasure is, that my children shall be educated, and brought forward with learning, reading, writing and cyphering; fourthly, my will and pleasure is, that the whole of said named three sons shall have the benefit of all their own crops and labour, as they shall come to the age of fifteen years, to be disposed of for their best advantage, by the advice of their guardian hereafter named; and if it shall come to pass that either of my two sons, Clarke or Adderton, shall die before they attain the age of one and twenty years, that then the survivor or survivors shall have the deceased's land, and my son William Skinner to have the deceased's servants and cattle; and if it shall please God that two or all three of my sons should die before they come to the age of one and twenty years, that then their lands, servants with stock, shall be equally divided among my surviving children; and furthermore, whereas my wife is joint purchaser with me in the Reserve, therefore, not knowing but what the eldest of my three sons, or the second, in case the eldest should die, shall hereafter go about to vex, or disturb the youngest son Adderton, pretending right from his mother in withholding the enjoyment, of what I have in this will given him, my will and pleasure is, that the said Clarke or William shall have no benefit by this my will, but their part wholly to redound to Adderton, to him, his heirs, and assigns for ever; and finally, my will and pleasure is, that my son, Robert Skinner whom I do constitute and appoint as guardian to my three young sons, shall take care to place some one or other upon each of the tracts of land given to my son William and son Adderton, that they may have homes to go to when they shall attain the age of twenty years, hoping that my wife, who has her life time in most of that which I have willed to my son Clarke, will be careful to promote his interest for his encouragement in respect of a dwelling; and if it shall please God that my son Robert should die, my will and pleasure is, that my two sons-in-law, Thomas Greefield and Joseph Letchworth, shall be guardians in his place and stead, hoping that they will be careful to see this my will accomplished in all respects, according to the true intent and purpose thereof, for the confirming of this my last will and testament,

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I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this eighth day of March, one thousand six hundred and eighty-five.

[Seal.] ROBERT SKINNER.

Signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of
ROBERT HOLDSWORTH,
ARTHUR HORNER,
ELIZABETH CARNALL,
WILLIAM MORE.

December 13th, 1686, then came Arthur Horner before me and made oath that he saw Robert Skinner sign, seal and deliver this within writing, as his last will and testament, as witness my hand.

THOMAS BROOK.

December 23d, 1686, then came William More and Elizabeth Carnall before me and made oath, that they did see Robert Skinner sign, seal and deliver the within writing as his last will and testament, as witness my hand.

THOMAS BROOK.

[Seal.] In testimony that the within is a true copy from the records of the orphan's court of Calvert county, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of my office, this 10th day of April, 1811.

Test, JO. WILKINSON, *Reg. Wills,*
Calvert County.

No. II.

SAMUEL HOLDSWORTH'S* WILL.

In the name of God, Amen, the 10th day of December, anno domini 1710, I, Samuel Holdsworth of Calvert county, gentleman, being at this present time of good health of body, and of sound and of perfect mind and memory, (Almighty God be praised for the same) yet calling to mind the certainty of death, and that the thereof is most certain, do make and declare this my last will and testament in manner and form following: first and principally, being penitent and sorry from the bottom of my heart for my sins past, most humbly desiring forgiveness of the same, I give and commit my soul into the hands of Almighty God, that gave it, hoping through the merits, death, and passion of mine only Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, to have free pardon and remission for the same; my body I commit to the earth to be decently buried, at the discretion of my executor hereafter named; and as touching such estate as it hath pleased God to bless me with all in this life, (after my just debts are paid and satisfied,) I give, bequeath, devise, and dispose of the same in manner and form following:

First,—I give and bequeath unto my son, Thomas Holdsworth, all that plantation and tract of land called Middle Fuller, whereon I now live, together with all houses now standing or being thereon, or so standing or being at the time of my decease; to have and to hold the same to him, the said Thomas Holdsworth and the heirs of his body, lawfully begotten, forever, and for the want of such issue, I give and bequeath the same unto my sister, Ann Holdsworth, and the heirs of her body forever, and for want of such issue, to the next heir and nearest of kindred, according to the common course of the law, subject nevertheless to the provisions and limitations hereinafter made and provided.

* The great grandfather of Jas. Wilkinson's grandmother, ex parte maternâ.

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Item.—I give and bequeath unto my said son Thomas, all my other tracts and several parcels of land, and plantations which I am now possessed of, within the province of Maryland, together with all houses, tobacco houses and granaries, standing or being on the same, to have, and to hold the same, and all and every part thereof unto him, the said Thomas Holdsworth, his heirs, and assigns forever, for their own proper use and behoof, subject nevertheless to the provisions hereinafter expressed; and as touching my personal estate, I give, devise, bequeath and order the same in manner following: first, I direct, order and appoint that all the negroes that I now have, or am possessed of at the time of my decease, shall be divided into three equal parts, one-third part whereof, I give and bequeath unto Mrs. Elizabeth Buckerfield, and her heirs and assigns forever, and I do direct and order the same to be delivered into her possession, within the space of one month after my decease, by my executor hereafter named; the other two-third parts I give and bequeath unto my said son Thomas, and to his heirs and assigns. Item.—I appoint, order and direct, that all goods, wares and merchandises, tobacco growing or in the house, plate, cash, debts within this province or elsewhere, tobacco in any warehouse or hands in England, stock of hogs, horses, sheep or cattle, and all other my goods or chattles whatsoever, (except by me in this last will and testament hereinafter otherwise bequeathed and disposed of,) be divided into three equal parts or shares, one-third part whereof I give and bequeath unto the said Elizabeth Buckerfield, and her heirs and assigns, to be delivered unto her in their several kinds and species, as near as the same may be decided by my executor hereafter named, within one month after my decease, or as soon as the same may or can possibly be done, and completed, according to my true intent and meaning, without any delay. Item.—I order and appoint that Mrs. Elizatheth Buckerfield, after my decease, shall if she pleases, and at her election take to her own use the furniture of the room she now lives in, and the chamber over that as the same is now standing, (plate excepted as before divided,) she allowing unto my said son Thomas, out of her own third part, before bequeathed unto her, so much as the same shall be appraised at by two sworn appraisers; and I do hereby further direct and order, that from and immediately after my decease, she, the said Elizabeth Buckerfield, shall have the use and possession of the said two rooms or chambers, to her own proper use, for, and during the time of her natural life, and also necessary and suitable accommodations so long as she shall think fit to stay and abide in the said house at the sole charge of my executor; and furthermore, I do hereby give and grant unto the said Elizabeth Buckerfield, during the said term of her natural life, liberty to use, employ, or work the several negroes hereby by me before bequeathed unto her, upon any or every of my several plantations or land before mentioned, provided always and upon this condition, that she, the said Elizabeth Buckerfield, shall live a single woman and unmarried, and that in case of her marriage again, the use of the said two rooms and the liberty before granted on my several plantations, to revert and come again to the said Thomas Holdsworth wholly; and it is my will and intent, that if the said Elizabeth Buckerfield, after my decease, do remove to England or elsewaere, and not stay and abide here, herself in person, she shall not grant or assign her right to the said two rooms or the land to any person or persons whatsoever; and further provided, that if any marriage hereafter shall happen to be had and solemnised be-

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tween me and the said Elizabeth Buckerfield, then, and in such case, if the said Elizabeth my wife, after my decease, shall make any other claim or demand of any dower, or other part of my estate whatsoever, more than is heretofore and hereby to her bequeathed, then all and every the bequest hereby made shall cease and be void, and the same shall come and descend unto my said son Thomas, unto whom I give and bequeath the same. All my household stuff whatsoever, not herein or hereby bequeathed, I do order and direct, shall be brought to an appraisement; one-third part thereof I give unto the said Elizabeth Buckerfield, and the other two-third parts I give unto my said son Thomas; and I do hereby leave it to the choice and election of my executor, hereafter named, to pay the said one-third part unto the said Elizabeth Buckerfield in money at the appraisement, or deliver her the one-third part of the goods so appraised; and moreover, it is my will and desire, and I do hereby order and appoint, that in case any dispute or difference should arise, or happen between the said Elizabeth Buckerfield and my said son Thomas, relating to the divisions of the said negroes or any other the goods or chattles before mentioned, each of the said parties, within ten days after such dispute arising, shall choose an indifferent person, and give notice of the same to the other, within the time of ten days limited, which said two indifferent persons shall judge and determine the same between them, and he or her refusing to stand and abide such judgment, shall forfeit and pay unto the other, out of his or her part or share of the goods and chattles aforesaid, the sum of one hundred pounds sterling; and farther yet, I do hereby declare and make known, that it is my will, true intent and meaning, that if my said son Thomas shall marry as I shall think fit, he live separate and apart from me; and it may be necessary and convenient for his then immediate support and maintenance, to furnish and to deliver into his possession any negroes or goods and chattles whatsoever, that so much as I shall value and esteem the same worth, by making him debtor for the same, such debts shall be accounted part of my estate, and shall be and go for such a part of his two-third parts as the same shall amount to. And whereas, my brother, John Holdsworth, is justly indebted to me by bond, bearing date some time since, the sum of one hundred and twelve pounds, one shilling and three-pence, and interest for several years past, I give and bequeath the same unto my sister, Ann Holdsworth, and her children, named Charles, William and Martha, to be equally divided between them, and notwithstanding all the several before mentioned bequests, it is my desire, if my said son Thomas should happen to die or depart this life before me, I direct and appoint my personal estate, before mentioned, in every part to be divided into two equal parts, one-half part or moiety whereof, I give unto my said sister, Ann Holdsworth, and her said children, to be equally divided between, and the other half part or moiety, I give unto the said Elizabeth Buckerfield, and in such case only. I make, name, ordain, and appoint, the said Elizabeth Buckerfield full and sole executor of this my last will and testament. Item.—I give and bequeath unto my brother, John Holdsworth, Captain Richard Smith, sen., Mr. Alexander Parran and Thomas Johnson, sen., a ring of twenty shillings a piece. And finally, I do hereby make, name, ordain, and appoint, my said son Thomas Holdsworth, full and sole executor, of this my last will and testament, hereby revoking all former and other wills by me heretofore at any time made, and appointing this to be, and stand for, and as my only last will and testament. In witness whereof, I, the said

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Samuel Holdsworth, have, to this my last will and testament, witnessed in the foregoing seven sheets of paper and thus far of the eighth, to every sheet set my hand, and to the first and last my seal, the day and year before written.

[Seal.] SAMUEL HOLDSWORTH.

Signed, sealed, published and declared, by the said Samuel Holdsworth, the testator, as his last will and testament, in the presence of,

SAMUEL MALDIN,
WILLIAM CHRISSOP,
THOMAS JOHNSON.

Calvert County, sect. On the 24th of February, 1710, personally appeared before me, Richard Dallam, deputy commissary of Calvert county, Thomas Johnson, William Chrissop, two of the evidences to the foregoing will, and severally made oath on the holy evangelists of Almighty God, that they did see the aforesaid Samuel Holdsworth sign, seal, publish, and declare, the before going in writing, of seven sides and part of the eight sides of paper as his last will and testament, and that the inter-lines therein made was expressed before the signing and sealing thereof, and that the time of sealing and publishing the same, he, the said Samuel Holdsworth, was of sound and perfect mind and memory.

RICHARD DALLAM, *D. C. Calvert County.*

In testimony that the within is a true copy from the records of the [SEAL.] orphan's court of Calvert county, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of my office, this 10th day of April, 1811.

TEST. JO. WILKINSON, *Reg. Wills, Calvert County.*

No. III.

JAMES HEIGHE'S* WILL.

In the name of God, Amen. I, James Heighe of All Saints parish, in Calvert county, Maryland, gentleman, being of sound mind and memory, do make and ordain this my last will and testament, in manner and form following: first, I commend my soul into the hands of God, who gave it, depending entirely on the merits of my Saviour, Jesus Christ, for the remission of my sins, and acceptance with his, and my heavenly father; and my body I commit to the earth, to be decently and christianly interred, hoping for the resurrection thereof to eternal life; at the discretion of my executors, hereafter named, and as touching all my worldly, real, and personal estate, I give and dispose as followeth, viz.

Imprimis.—I will that all my just debts and funeral expenses be duly paid, and satisfied. Item.—I will and bequeath unto my son, James Heighe, and his heirs, four young negroes, named Ben, Nanny, Lucy and Maria, and also James and Hannah, son and daughter of Jenny and Will, with one feather bed and furniture, to be delivered to him at the age of eighteen years. Item.—I give and bequeath unto my daughter Althea, one feather bed and furniture, to be delivered to her at the age of sixteen, or day of marriage, which shall first happen.

Item.—I give and bequeath unto my loving wife, Ann Heighe, all my now dwelling plantation during her natural life, that is to say, the whole breadth of my land on the bay side, to the eastward of the creek, and branch of Plumb point, and farther my will is, that my said wife, as long as she continueth a widow, shall possess, enjoy and occupy, and have to her own use and benefit all my other lands till my son James Heighe attain to the age of eighteen years.

* The great great grandfather of Jas. Wilkinson.

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Item.—I give and bequeath unto my son James Heighe, his heirs for ever, lawfully begotten of his body, all my lands, and in case of failure of such heirs, then my mind and will is, that all my lands aforesaid, shall be equally divided into two equal parts, and portions, between my daughter Althea, and my two grand sons James Tongue and James Bourne, and further my will and meaning is, that after the division of said lands is made, my daughter Althea shall have her first choice, to have and to hold that moiety she chooses, to her and her heirs for ever, and the other half to be divided between my two grandsons James Tongue and James Bourne into equal parts or portions, to be enjoyed by them and their heirs for ever, but in case of failure of heirs of my grandson, James Tongue, then my will is, that his moiety of land be enjoyed and possessed, by my daughter Althea and her heirs for ever.

Item.—I give and bequeath unto my daughters, Elizabeth and Mary, ten pounds current money of England, for each, as a token of my fatherly affection towards them.

Item.—I will and bequeath unto my two grandsons James Tongue and James Bourne, to each of them one-tenth part of my personal estate, after my debts and legacies are satisfied. Item.—My will and mind is, that all the rest and residue of my personal estate not disposed of by this will, be equally divided between my loving wife, my son James and daughter Althea; and lastly, I will, ordain, and appoint my loving wife, whole and sole executor, of this my last will and testament, hereby revoking all other will or wills by me heretofore made. Item.—Further to shew my paternal care and love to my children, I do will and appoint my son-in-law, Sabret Sollers, as trustee to look after and take care of my son James's and daughter Althea's estates, until they come to age, and also to take it into his possession in case of danger of any waste either of the lands or personal estate, and my desire is, that my son James and daughter Althea, be, and remain under the care and direction of my said trustee, immediately after the decease of my loving wife, Ann Heighe, until they come to their respective ages to possess and enjoy their estates themselves, and this I desire may be considered as part of my last will and testament, bearing date the twenty-sixth day of July, anno domini, one thousand seven hundred twenty and five, in witness whereof, I set my hand and seal the day and date above written.

[Seal.] JAMES HEIGHE.

Signed, sealed, and declared, in the presence of us,

ROBERT FREELAND,
JAMES MOLDEN,
ELIZABETH ALLEN.

12th November, 1725, came, Robert Freeland and James Molden, two of the subscribing evidences, and declared according to law, that they saw the testator sign, seal, and deliver this to be his last will and testament, and at the time of his so doing he was sound in mind, and in perfect memory to the best of either of their knowledge, that Elizabeth Allen was present at the same time and see the same. Before,

WM. SMITH, *Dep. Com. for Calvert County.*

In testimony that the within is a true copy from the records of the orphan's court of Calvert county, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of my office, this 10th day of April, 1811.

[SEAL]

TEST. JO. WILKINSON, *Reg. Wills, Calvert County.*

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No. IV.

JOSEPH WILKINSON'S WILL.

In the name of God, Amen. I, Joseph Wilkinson of Calvert county, in the province of Maryland, merchant, being in a bad state of health, but of sound and disposing mind and memory, do make this my last will and testament, in manner and form following, viz. *Imprimis.*—I recommend my soul to its creator hoping for pardon and remission of all mine offences; my body I desire may be buried in a decent manner at the discretion of my executors, hereafter named. Item.—I give to my brother-in-law, Mr. John Skinner, an handsome suit of mourning, and a mourning ring of 20*s.* sterling price. Item.—I give and bequeath to my dear and loving wife, a full third part of all my personal estate, of what nature or kind soever, consisting, to wit, money or tobacco in England or elsewhere, goods in store, cash in hand, debts out-standing, slaves, servants, cattle, plate, household goods, and every other thing whatsoever. Item.—I give and bequeath to my daughter Elizabeth, one other full third part of my personal estate as aforesaid. Item.—I give and bequeath to my son Joseph, the remaining third part of my estate as aforesaid, but my will is, that if my wife be now with child or children, that then the two-thirds of my personal estate, so given and bequeathed to my daughter and son above named, be equally divided share and share alike, between such child or children to be born, and those now in being. Item.—I do nominate, and appoint my said wife executrix, of this my last will and testament, but in case of her death, I do then make my said brother-in-law, John Skinner, executor thereof, and I will that he be then guardian to my children, not doubting his utmost care of their persons, education and fortune. Lastly, I do hereby revoke, and utterly make void, all other or former wills by me ever made; and in testimony that the writing contained in this half sheet of paper, is my last will and testament, I have signed, sealed, published and declared the same to be, in the presence of the witnesses hereto attesting and subscribing, this twenty-fifth day of April, anno domini, 1734.

[Seal.] JO. WILKINSON.

Signed, sealed, published, and declared, in presence of us,
JOHN SMITH,
JOSEPH THORNTON,
ROGER BOYCE,
ALEXANDER LAWSON.

Calvert County, ss. July, 1735, came Roger Boyce and Alexander Lawson, two of the subscribing witnesses to the within will, and made oath on the holy evangelists of Almighty God, that they saw the testator Joseph Wilkinson sign and seal, and heard him publish, pronounce, and declare, the within instrument of writing as his last will and testament, and that at the time of his so doing, he was, to the best of their knowledge and apprehension, of sound and perfect memory and understanding. Sworn to before me,

GABRIEL PARKER, *Dep. Com. Calvert County.*

In testimony that the within is a true copy from the records of the [Seal.] orphan's court of Calvert county, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of my office, this 13th day of April, 1811.

Test, JO. WILKINSON, *Reg. Wills, Calvert County.*

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No. V.

EXTRACTS FROM THE TRIAL OF CAPTAIN TREAT.

I premise the following documents from Captain Treat's trial, before a general court martial appointed by Maj. Gen. Brown, on the charge of "*cowardice before the enemy*," produced by the said Major-general, that my readers may be enabled to comprehend the motives of his address to President Madison, and catch a glance at the brutal and dishonourable conduct of Major-general Brown which produced it. It is high time for the friends of liberty and justice to arouse from their lethargy, when such acts of despotism are tolerated, and such oppressive measures are sanctioned by a chief magistrate of the union. With this letter of Captain Treat, the proceedings of the general court martial were submitted to President Madison, and of course the whole transaction was before him.

GENERAL ORDERS.

Adjutant General's Office, Chippeway, July 5th, 1814.

A transaction degrading to the command, occurred under the Major-general's eye this morning.

Captain Treat's attempts to excuse himself, in that his detachment was a return picket, makes the thing worse.

Captain Treat shall no longer serve in the 21st regiment; nor in this division during the campaign.

By order of Major-general Brown.

(Signed) C. K. GARDNER, *Adjutant General.*

Extracts from General Brown's official report of the battle of Chippeway, dated 7th July, 1814.

Early on the morning of the 5th (July) the enemy commenced a petty war upon our pickets, and as he was indulged, his presumption increased; by noon he shewed himself on the left of our exterior line, and attacked one of our pickets as it was returning to camp.

Captain Treat, who commanded it, retired disgracefully, leaving a wounded man on the ground. Captain Biddle, of the artillery, impelled by feelings highly honourable to him as a soldier and officer, promptly assumed the command of this picket, led it back to the wounded man, and brought him off the field.

I ordered Captain Treat, on the spot, to retire from the army, and as I am anxious that no officer shall serve under my command, who can be suspected of cowardice, I advise that Captain Treat and Lieutenant ———,* who was also with the picket, be struck from the rolls of the army.

Sentence of the Court.

The court having heard the evidence and the defence of the prisoner, as above, directed the room to be cleared, and proceeded to pronounce sentence.

* The copy is exact, the name of Lieutenant *Morrow*, was omitted; but he had a brother *member of Congress*; nevertheless, the conduct of the Lieutenant was beyond reproach or suspicion.

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After mature deliberation on the testimony adduced, the court find the accused, Captain JOSEPH TREAT, of the 21st infantry, *not guilty* of the charge or specification preferred against him—and DO HONOURABLY ACQUIT HIM.

The above is a true copy from the original.

WM. ANDERSON, *Lieut. 18th inf. & Judge Advocate.*

Approval of the Sentence.

Adjutant General's Office, Sackett's Harbour, 3d July, 1815.

After mature deliberation, the court find the accused, Captain Joseph Treat, of the 21st regiment, *not guilty* of the charge or specification preferred against him, and *do honourably acquit him.*

Taking into consideration all the circumstances relating to Captain Treat's case, Major-general Brown believes it to be his duty to approve the sentence of the court. But he embraces this opportunity to say, that he has never seen an instance of American soldiers, such as Captain Treat's command, abandoning their officers in the face of an enemy. This is not the character of the soldiers our country breeds. So far as the experience of the Major-general goes, they have ever stood by their officers, so long as their officers were disposed to stand by their *colours* or *their honour.*

It would appear, however, from the testimony before the court, that the men composing the picket guard, commanded by Captain Treat, on the morning of the 5th July, 1814, were an exception to the general rule, and therefore he is honourably acquitted.

I certify that the above is a correct copy of the original, handed into this office.

BENJ. F. LARNED, *Acting Assist. Adj. General.*

Sackett's Harbour, July 6th, 1815.

We, the undersigned, officers of the late 21st regiment United States infantry, having served during the late war, with Captain Joseph Treat, of the same regiment, bear testimony to the correctness of his conduct as an officer; to the uniformity of his deportment as a gentleman, and to his firmness and courage on every occasion in which he has met the enemy.

JOSIAH H. VOSE, *late Major 21st infantry.*
SULLIVAN BURBANK, *brevet Major 21st infantry.*
P. PELHAM, *Captain 21st infantry.*
BENJ. F. LARNED, *brevet Captain 21st infantry.*
JOHN W. HOLDING, *brevet Captain 21st infantry.*

Portsmouth, N. H. August 25th, 1815.

Sir.—I have received and read the report of your trial before a general court martial, on the charges which appeared against you in General Brown's official account of the battle of Chippeway. Having witnessed your gallant conduct at Chrystler's field, but a few months before; and having always considered you as an attentive and vigilant officer, nothing could have surprised me more than the exhibition of such charges against you. I am happy to find they were with-

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out foundation. The result of this long sought for investigation is no less gratifying to your brother officers than it is honourable to yourself.

Accept, Sir, the assurance of my respect and esteem,

T. UPHAM, *Lt. Col. late 21st regiment.*

Captain Joseph Tyeat, Boston.

To James Madison, President of the United States.

Sir.—To whom can I so properly inscribe the following sheets, as to yourself? since the abuse which compels me to appeal to your justice, and the public sympathy reached me through the medium of a commission, signed by your hand, and conferred upon me without solicitation.

The fitness of the application will I hope supercede the necessity of an apology for the intrusion, and secure your approbation of the trespass I make on your time.

To you it will not be improper to remark, what may be well applied to every fellow citizen; that the rights of persons and of property, and the very existence of the republic, depend on the inflexible maintenance of the letter of the constitution and the law. Admit a latitude of construction for the extension of power, and you throw down the barriers of the public safety, and insensibly mould the palladium of our liberties, into that form which may best suit the grasp of ambition.

It is not for redress of my personal injuries, however unmerited and extreme, that I have ventured to intrude the recital of those injuries on your attention; proved as they have been by testimony on which a military tribunal has vindicated my honour; but it is to warn you of the perfidy, the violence, and usurpation, of which the officer is capable, whom blind fortune has imposed on you for the chief of the national military force; that you may assert the supremacy of the laws, and prevent the recurrence of similar outrages, on the *rights* of those who have the *right* to look up to you for protection.

Every encroachment on the laws, however minute, is a step toward despotism; and therefore, the slightest infraction of them should be instantaneously checked; or the precedents of yesterday, may become laws to-day, and political expediency may readily be converted into stilts for power to-morrow; mounted on which, those, who administer the government, may trample the governed into the dust.

The articles of war clearly define the few rights of a soldier, and these ought to be stedfastly guarded, as well by a strict observance of the compact with the state, as by that *chaste sense of delicacy and honour*, which has been considered the peculiar *attribute of military men*; but if a military chief, to gratify his *caprice* or *resentment*, or to *blazon* forth his *character* for *sensibilities* to which he is a stranger, can rob a subordinate of his sword, and expel him from his legitimate corps, then military tribunals become superfluous; by the same exertion of power he may make appointments to command, and thus save the President of the United States the responsibility of nominating, and the Senate that of confirmation.

Or, if a military chief may, WITH IMPUNITY, suspend an officer from command, on a groundless pretext, and, disdaining all explanation, promise him a court of inquiry into his conduct; if he may, after making such promise, prejudge the object of his blind wrath, and in an official despatch recommend that he

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should be arbitrarily stricken from the honourable rolls of the army, without a hearing, and in violation of the sacred charter of the land; if, when pressed for the promised inquiry, the chief, to elude it, should, by his official organ, inform the applicant that he was not on the rolls, and could not have an inquiry: if, on the declaration of this injured officer, that in the alternative of being refused an inquiry, he should apply to the secretary of war for redress, this chief, dreading the appeal, should suddenly shift his ground, again recognise as an officer, the subject of his vengeance, and abandoning the inquiry, which he had repeatedly promised, should charge him with an infamous crime, and cause him to be arrested: if the arrested officer, unaffected by this menace, remaining firm to his purpose, should be peremptorily ordered for trial on the 3d of October, 1814, before a general court martial then in session at Fort Erie, and yet should not be able to procure a copy of the charge on which he was to be arraigned, until the 12th of the same month, on which day said court was dissolved, and he still continued in arrest: if, after repeated subsequent applications for a hearing, this arrested officer could not obtain a trial until the 5th of April, 1815, although several general courts martial had been holden during the interval: if, after all these arbitrary delays and denials of justice; after the denunciation of the chief (on the 5th of July, nine months before) who held up his subordinate as a spectacle of reproach to the army, and a subject of vilification to licentious prints; after depriving him of all participation in the scenes of glory which awaited his comrades in arms: I repeat, Sir, if after these multiplied privations, indignities, and wrongs, the proceedings of the general court martial, before which this officer was tried, should not furnish a shadow of cause for his arrest; and if by a solemn court of law and honour, selected by the accuser himself, the injured citizen should be honourably acquitted of the foul offence imputed to him, by the author of his wrongs; then, I will most respectfully inquire, what is the effect of the law, and where is the security to the feelings or fame, the rights or interests of subordinate officers, against the outrages of ignorance and brutality? The facts are before you, and the decision must rest upon your own mind.

But it cannot be overlooked, Sir, that in a government whose venality and corruption, has long been a popular theme, the hand of criminal justice seized on a military commander, for inflicting an arbitrary punishment on a non-commissioned officer, and that Governor Wall, in spite of wealth and patronage, for this crime, expired on a gibbet.

Removed from the ranks of honour, and smarting under the sense of the wrongs I have suffered; I hope I may be excused for invoking your attention to the fundamental interests of the people, over whom you have been called to preside, involved as they have been in a case so extraordinary in a free commonwealth.

Suffer not pretensions to services, nor military rank and eclat,—*by whatever means attained*, to sanction despotic rule, or screen the oppressor from merited punishment. In your hands I must hope the fountain of justice will continue undefiled; that men elevated to stations high and honourable, in trust for a young and glorious nation, will feel themselves bound to preserve its purity by their vigilance, and at every hazard and every sacrifice, transmit the rich inheritance to posterity; nor permit the source to be polluted, because too soon the poison will be diffused to the remotest streams, and then the blood of our fathers will have flowed without effect, and we shall have lived in vain.

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With the best wishes for your fame and happiness, and for the honour, prosperity, independence, and justice of our country,

I remain, Sir, with high consideration and respect, your most obedient humble servant,

JOSEPH TREAT, (*late*) *Capt. 21st inf. U. S. army.*

No. VI.

MEMORIAL OF JAMES WILKINSON.

To James Madison, President of the United States, the memorial of Major-general James Wilkinson, with the highest deference and respect, sets forth——

That after thirty years of faithful military service, your memorialist has the misfortune to find himself the only individual of the nation interdicted from drawing his sword in its defence; and this, at a conjuncture when his native country has been invaded, and its capital ravaged, by a vindictive and powerful enemy; at a time when every head, heart, and hand, should be engaged in the common cause, to support the government, and defend the sea-coast from desolation.

That your memorialist, conscious of the rectitude of his own views and intentions, has suffered severely in his feeling, from the situation in which he has been placed; but in the present eventful moment, he believes it to be his duty to repress every thought, which would apply exclusively to himself, and to give every exertion of his mind and body, to the service of his country. He will not therefore, at this critical juncture, ask of the President, that which for himself he most wishes, to wit, an immediate trial, because he is aware it may not be in the President's power to grant such a request with propriety; but he most ardently prays, that during the present exigency, the arrest, under which he has been placed, may be suspended, and that he may be permitted to resume his command, and serve his beloved country with his best abilities; relying always on the justice of the President, to revive his arrest as soon as it can with propriety be done, and thereby afford to your memorialist the earliest possible opportunity of vindicating his own honour, putting his accusers to shame, and justifying himself to his country.

Your memorialist ventures to submit his hard case to your consideration, because he has no other appeal, and whilst he deeply regrets the intrusion, he hopes the occasion may excuse the trespass.

JAMES WILKINSON, *Major-general.*

Fountaine Rock, Washington County, Maryland, Sept. 15th, 1814.

No. VII.

LETTER FROM GOVERNOR ZUNIGA TO GOVERNOR CLAIBORNE.

Pensacola, July 12th, 1812.

Sir.—On the 5th inst. I arrived at this place, to take charge of the province, by order of his excellency the captain-general of the island of Cuba and both Floridas. I have scarcely taken charge of said command, when I am informed by a letter of the commanding officer at Mobile, bearing date of yesterday, that

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the American flag was hoisted up at Rio Pescado, and that the day before, at half past eleven o'clock A. M. there arrived at Dolphin island two armed boats, the people of which landed, and at twelve o'clock they hoisted up the American flag, intimating to the dstachment there, that, in case they should not withdraw, within four days, they would be made prisoners, extending even that intimation to the pilot, who was cautioned, that if he should aid any Spanish or English vessel, he would be sent to New Orleans. This news has astonished me the more, that I have no information that the United States have declared war against Spain, and that your excellency should carry the thing so far, as to continue the aggressions committed in this part of the possessions of the king my master, El Senior Don Fernando, the seventh of Bourbon, insulting with temerity his arms, by taking possession of a territory which by no title belongs to your government. Under these circumstances, and in consequence of the responsibility which my duty imposes upon me, I am compelled to inform your excellency, that the United States have invaded in this province a part of the territories of my sovereign, and have possessed themselves thereof without any other title than their will.

The United States, from the moment they took possession of Louisiana, have despoiled Spain of her indisputable right to the free navigation of the Mississippi river.

The United States, forgetting the steps made at several times by means of their agents, in order to be permitted to carry some goods and provisions to the fort Stoddert, and the presents destined for the Chactaw Indians, have, by their own private authority, adjudged to themselves the free use of the waters of the rivers Tombigbee and Alabama.

The United States have claimed the right of passing on said waters, and before the fort of Mobile, with ammunition and warlike stores, without demanding nor obtaining, as prescribed by our military laws, the license from his excellency the captain-general of these provinces; and finally, without mentioning other breaches of what has been stipulated and agreed upon in a solemn treaty, and other cases in which the United States have forgotten the services which they have received from Spain, in promoting their independence, your excellency has just made an hostile step, insulting the arms of the king my master, by taking possession of a property which does not belong to them of right nor in fact.

Your excellency may rest assured, that in case that you should not give the proper orders that your troops and agents may withdraw from the invaded countries, for which invasion I do solemnly protest against the injury made to the integrity of the territory of my sovereign, and if the aggressions are carried on, the Spanish officers will fulfil their duty, and opposing all the resistance which the commander will require, the Spanish arms shall be exerted to assert the rights of the crown.

The result in such a case will, no doubt, be that there will be blood spilled, and that the good harmony which has existed till this day, between our respective nations, will be disturbed; but as the party respecting the offence, was never considered as the aggressor, your excellency will not be able to justify yourself before God nor man, of all the fatal consequences which may ensue.

God preserve your excellency many years. Sir.

(Signed) MAURICIO DE ZUNIGA.

To his Excellency William C. C. Claiborne.

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No. VIII.

FROM GEN. VAN RENSSELLAER TO MAJOR-GENERAL DEARBORN.

Head Quarters, Lewistown, October 14th, 1812.

Sir.—As the movements of this army under my command, since I had the last the honour to address you on the 8th, have been of a very important character, producing consequences serious to many individuals; establishing facts actually connected with the interest of the service, and the safety of the army; and as I stand prominently responsible for some of these consequences, I beg leave to explain to you, Sir, and through you to my country, the situation and circumstances in which I have had to act, and the reasons and motives which governed me; and if the result is not all that might have been wished, it is such that, when the whole ground shall be viewed, *I shall cheerfully submit myself to the judgment of my country.*

In my letter of the 8th instant, I apprised you that the crisis in this campaign was rapidly advancing; and that (to repeat the same) "*the blow must be soon struck, or all the toil and expense of the campaign go for nothing, for the whole will be tinged with dishonour.*"

Under such impressions, I had on the 5th instant written to Brigadier-general Smyth, of the United States forces, requesting an interview with him, Major-general Hall, and the commandants of regiments, for the purpose of conferring upon the subject of future operations. I wrote Major-general Hall to the same purport. On the 11th, had received no answer from General Smyth; but in a note me of the 10th, General Hall mentioned that General Smyth had not, yet then, agreed upon any day, for the consultation.

In the mean time, the partial success of Lieutenant Elliott at Black Rock (of which, however, I have received no official information) began to excite a strong disposition in the troops to act. This was expressed to me through various channels, in the shape of an *alternative;* that they must have *orders to act* or at all hazards they *would go home.* I forbear, here, commenting upon the obvious consequences, to me personally, of longer withholding my orders under such circumstances.

I had a conference with ———, as to the possibility of getting some person to pass over to Canada, and obtain correct information. On the morning of the 4th, he wrote to me that he had procured the man, who bore his letter, to go over. Instructions were given him; he passed over; obtained such information, as warranted an immediate attack. This was confidentially communicated to several of my first officers, and produced great zeal to act; more especially as it might have a controlling effect upon the movement at Detroit, where, it was supposed, that General Brock had gone with all the force he dared to spare from the Niagara frontier. The best preparations in my power, were, therefore, made to dislodge the enemy from the heights of Queenstown, and possess ourselves of the village; where the troops might be sheltered from the distressing inclemency of the weather.

Lieutenant-colonel Fleming's flying artillery, and a detachment of regular troops, under his command, were ordered to be up in season from Fort Niagara. Orders were also sent General Smyth, to send down from Buffaloe, such detachment of his brigade as existing circumstances in that vicinity might

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warrant. The attack was to be made at 3 o'clock, on the morning of the 11th, by crossing over in boats from the old ferry opposite the heights. To avoid any embarrassment in crossing the river, (which is here a sheet of violent eddies) experienced boatmen were procured to take the boats, from the landing below to the place of embarkation, Lieutenant Sim was considered the man of the greatest skill for this service; he went ahead, and in the extreme darkness, passed the intended place far up the river; and there in a most extraordinary manner, fastened his boat to the shore and abandoned the detachment. In *this front boat he had carried nearly all the oars, which were prepared for the boats.* In this agonising dilemma stood officers and men, whose ardour had not been cooled by exposure, through the night, to one of the most tremendous north-east storms, which continued unabated, for twenty-eight hours, and deluged the whole camp. Colonel Van Rensselaer was to have commanded the detachment.

After this result, I had hoped the patience of the troops would have continued, until I could submit the plan suggested in my letter of the 8th, that I might act under, and in conformity to the opinion which might be then expressed. But my hope was idle; the previously excited ardour seemed to have gained new heat from the late miscarriage; the brave were mortified to stop short of their object, and the timid thought laurels half won by the attempt.

On the morning of the 12th, such was the pressure upon me from all quarters, that I became satisfied that my refusal to act, might involve me in suspicion and the service in disgrace.

Lieutenant-colonel Christie, who had just arrived at the Four Mile Creek, had late in the night of the first contemplated attack, gallantly offered me his own and his mens' services; but he got my permission too late. He now again came forward, had a conference with Colonel Van Rensselaer, and begged that he might have the honour of a command in the expedition. The arrangement was made. Colonel Van Rensselaer was to command one column of 300 militia; and Lieutenant-colonel Christie a column of the same number of regular troops.

Every precaution was now adopted as to boats, and the most confidential and experienced men to manage them. At an early hour in the night, Lieutenant-colonel Christie marched his detachment, by the rear road, from Niagara to camp. At 7 in the evening, Lieutenant-colonel Stranahan's regiment, moved from Niagara falls; at 8 o'clock, Mead's—and at 9, Lieutenant-colonel Blan's regiment marched from the same place. All were in camp in good season. Agreeably to my orders issued upon this occasion, the two columns were to pass over together; as soon as the heights should be carried, Lieutenant-colonel Fenwick's flying artillery was to pass over; then Major Mullany's detachment of regulars; and the other troops to follow in order.

Colonel Van Rensselaer with great presence of mind, ordered his officers to proceed with rapidity, and storm the fort. This service was gallantly performed, and the enemy driven down the hill in every direction. Soon after this, both parties were considerably reinforced, and the conflict was renewed in various places. Many of the enemy took shelter behind a stone guard house, where a piece of ordnance was now briskly served. I ordered the fire of our battery to be directed upon the guard house; and it was so effectually done, that with 8 or 10 shot the fire was silenced. The enemy then retreated behind a large stone house; but in a short time the route became general, and the

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enemy's fire was silenced, except from a one gun battery, so far down the river as to be out of the reach of our heavy ordnance; and our light pieces could not silence it. A number of boats now passed over, unannoyed except by the one unsilenced gun. For some time after I passed over, the victory appeared complete; but in the expectation of further attacks, I was taking measures for fortifying my camp immediately; the direction of this service I committed to Lieutenant Totten of the engineers. But very soon the enemy were reinforced by a detachment of several hundred Indians from Chippewa; they commenced a furious attack; but were promptly met and routed by the rifle and bayonet. By this time I perceived my troops were embarking very slowly. I passed immediately over to accelerate their movements; but to my utter astonishment, I found, that at the very moment when complete victory was in our hands, the ardour of the unengaged troops had entirely subsided. I rode in all directions; urged the men by every consideration to pass over—but in vain. Lieutenant-colonel Bloom who had been wounded in action, returned, mounted his horse, and rode through the camp; as did also Judge Peck, who happened to be here, exhorting the companies to proceed—but all in vain.

At this time a large reinforcement from Fort George, was discovered coming up the river. As the battery on the hill was considered an important check against their ascending the heights, measures were immediately taken to send them a fresh supply of ammunition, as I learnt there were left only 20 shot for the 18 pounders. The reinforcements, however, obliqued to the right from the road, and formed a junction with the Indians, in the rear of the heights. Finding to my infinite mortification, that no reinforcement would pass over; seeing that another severe conflict must soon commence; and knowing that the brave men at the heights, were quite exhausted, and nearly out of ammunition; all I could do, was to send them a fresh supply of cartridges. At this critical moment, I despatched a note to General Wadsworth acquainting him with our situation: leaving the course to be pursued much to his own judgment, with assurance that if he thought best to retreat, I would endeavour to send as many boats, as I could command, and cover his retreat by every fire I could safely make. But the boats were dispersed; many of the boatmen had fled, panic struck; and but few got off. My note, however, could but little more than have reached General W. about 4 o'clock, when a most severe and obstinate conflict commenced, and continued about half an hour, with a tremendous fire of cannon, flying artillery and musketry. The enemy succeeded in re-possessing their battery, and gaining advantage on every side; the brave men who *had* gained the victory, exhausted of strength and ammunition, and grieved at the unpardonable neglect of their fellow soldiers, gave up the conflict.

I can only add that *the victory was really won; but lost*, for the want of a small reinforcement; *one-third part of the idle men might have saved all.*

I have the honour to be, *&c.*

STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER.

Hon. William Eustis, Secretary of War.

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No. IX.

TESTIMONY OF COLONEL LEAVENWORTH.

Delhi, January 15th, 1815.

Dear Sir,—At your request I send you a statement of facts which transpired under my view during the action at the falls of Niagara on the 25th of July last. By this, you will be able to ascertain, if my attendance and testimony will be material at your Court of Enquiry, and hope you will think it may be dispensed with.

On that day the left division of the Northern Army lay at Chippewa, on the south side of that creek, except the ninth regiment, which was posted in and near the Block-House, on the north side of the Chippewa, near the junction of that creek with the Niagara, in advance towards the enemy. It was my lot to be the officer of the day. During the day, the Captain commanding picket No. 1, on the Niagara road, informed me he had discovered the advance of the enemy to consist of one troop of the 19th light dragoons, and two companies of infantry.

With a glass, which was at the picket, the enemy were plainly seen across the bend in the river, at and near the falls. They were at the house of Mrs. Wilson near the falls, and many officers in British uniform were to be seen. These facts were immediately related at head quarters. I was told the enemy could not be in force, as they had thrown a large portion of their forces across the Niagara, from Queenstown to Lewistown. It was apprehended to be the intention of the enemy to advance up the river on the American side, to Schlosser, where our sick, ammunition, and other stores, then were. Not having the means either of transporting these stores to the west side of the river, or troops to the other side to defend them, General Scott was ordered to march immediately to Queenstown, with a view to induce the enemy to recross the Niagara. I was immediately relieved as officer of the day, and ordered by General Scott to put my regiment, without delay, in light marching order. This order was obeyed. And in less than fifteen minutes, General Scott's brigade, with Towson's company of artillery, and Captain Harris with a troop of U. S. and volunteer dragoons were on their march for Queenstown. Having proceeded down the river about two miles and an half, we came in sight of the enemy's advance. General Scott now halted his column, which I ought to have before stated consisted (in addition to those stated) of the ninth regiment, and which I had the honour to command. The eleventh regiment commanded by Lieutenant-colonel (then Major) M'Neil, the 22d regiment commanded by Colonel Brady, and the 25th regiment commanded by Colonel (then Major) Jesup, amounting in all, according to the best estimate I can now make, to about 700 men. The ninth consisted at that time of 150 rank and file.

The enemy immediately began to retire before us: but from the information of the inhabitants, it was thought they intended to give us battle. General Scott now ordered me with the ninth regiment to the left of the road, and to keep within supporting distance of the column; having gained my position, the column again moved forward. After marching in quick time about half a mile, and coming to a narrow piece of woods north of Mrs. Wilson's, and between her house and the village at Lundy's lane, the enemy commenced a fire upon our advance, which consisted of Captain Harris's command, and a com-

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pany of infantry commanded by that gallant officer, Captain Pentland, of the 22d infantry. The column were again halted, and I received orders to take my position with my command in the column of line. After this order was executed, General Scott detached the 25th regiment under the command of Colonel Jesup to the right, to seek and attack the left of the enemy's line. The ninth, twenty-second, and eleventh regiments now passed the advanced corps by order of General Scott, and moved into a smooth field on the north side of the before mentioned woods, and west of the Niagara road. It was now about half past five o'clock, P. M. the enemy commenced firing upon us from nine pieces of artillery (two of which were brass 24 pounders) and within canister distance. They also opened at the same time a brisk fire upon us from a heavy line of infantry posted to the right, and obliquely in front of their artillery, often advancing into the field so far as to have the rear of the battalion or regiment in advance clear of the woods. General Scott ordered, "form line to the front." The right of the column being in front, this order was immediately executed by the *echelon* movement of companies to the left. The 22d and 11th regiments moved in column until gaining their respective distances, formed line in the same manner. At about the same time the company of artillery under the command of Colonel (then Captain) Towson, an officer above my encomium, was moved up and formed on the right of the ninth regiment, and by its frequent and incessant discharges highly animated the spirit of the troops. Under this formation the action continued for nearly an hour, when I heard that the 11th regiment, being out of ammunition and their gallant leader Colonel M'Neil severely wounded, and all the Captains of that regiment either killed or wounded, had retired from the field. These facts were related to me by Captain John Bliss of that regiment, who, though severely wounded, gallantly offered his services to me, as did also Major (then Captain) Harris, of the Dragoons, his command being unable, from the nature of the ground, to act. I cannot forbear to mention that Lieutenant Crawford, adjutant, and Lieutenant Sawyer, as well as several other officers, whose names I do not now recollect, of the 11th regiment, joined my command, and rendered me very able and essential services, particularly those gentlemen whose names I have mentioned.

Soon after the 11th regiment had retired, Colonel Brady of the 22d regiment being severely wounded, and that regiment having also exhausted its ammunition, shared the same fate with the 11th, and many of the officers, as well as rank and file, joined the standard of the 9th, and fought the enemy with a spirit and bravery bordering upon desperation. I regret that the names of those officers are not at present recollected, and that I have not any documents in my possession by which I can ascertain them.

Colonel Towson finding from the elevated situation of the enemy's artillery that he could not bring his artillery to bear upon them, had nearly or quite ceased firing, and from at least 20 minutes before sun-down, the field was contended for by the enemy against the 9th regiment alone, and those who had joined its standard. During this time, General Scott sent his aid, Captain Worth, with orders to *advance* upon the enemy with a view to charge him. We ceased firing, and advanced with supported arms, until the order was countermanded: probably in consequence of the shattered condition of the 11th and 22d regiments. Throwing forward our right to meet the enemy, who

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were pressing very hard upon our left, the regiment again commenced firing more briskly, if possible, than before. A circumstance occurred during this time, which, though highly gratifying, fills me with remorse to mention; and nothing but the honour of my corps, would induce me to do so. The bearer of the battalion colours of the 11th being cut down, I presumed those colours had fallen to the ground, and it was the peculiar good fortune of Lieutenant Otis Fisher, of the 9th regiment, to find and raise them, into the hand of the standard bearer of the 9th regiment, who was at that time Corporal Keniston, senior Corporal of the colour guard. Sergeant Dewing, to whom they had been entrusted, (for want of a sufficient number of officers,) having been severely wounded, and compelled to leave the field.

Major Harris again came to me, and offered me his services. I desired him to inform General Scott that the rule for retreating was fulfilled. General Scott soon came and ordered me to maintain my ground, and gave me the pleasing information that General Brown was approaching with General Ripley's brigade, and General Porter's volunteers.

At this moment, General Scott's horse was wounded and rendered useless.

At about 9 o'clock, as I suppose from the circumstance of its being then dark, the arrival of General Ripley's brigade and other reinforcements was announced.

At this moment the enemy ceased their fire, and retired from the field.

General Scott ordered all the men of the 11th and 22d regiments who could be found, to be collected and formed into one battalion. While we were doing this, General Scott announced to us the capture of Major-general Rial; the men gave three cheers, which drew a shell from the enemy, which passed our line, and exploded in the column of artillery, commanded by Lieutenant-colonel (then Major) Hindman, and blew up a caisson of ammunition belonging to Captain Ritchie's company.

A brisk and heavy fire of musketry informed us that General Ripley with his brigade had attacked the enemy on the hill with a view to carry their park of artillery. The firing on the hill soon ceased, and the battalion composed of the 9th, 11th, and 22d regiments being formed, the command of it was given to Colonel Brady, who yet continued on the field, though severely wounded. He was assisted by Major Arrowsmith, of the 22d. General Scott's brigade major, Captain Smith of the 6th, and his aid-de-camp, Captain Worth, of the 23d, being both severely wounded, and having left the field, General Scott accepted an offer from me to act as his aid.

General Scott then formed the remainder of the brigade (except the 25th regiment) into column, and moved across the field in a westerly direction, and formed them in line on the south side of a narrow lane a little to the south of, and running nearly the same direction as Lundy's lane. I was then ordered by General Scott, to find General Brown, if possible, and desire him to give orders for the disposition of General Scott's brigade. I rode on the hill, and the enemy again commenced an attack, with a view to regain their artillery; but they were soon repulsed, and I found General Brown, who rode with me to see General Scott. After Generals Brown and Scott had conversed a few minutes, I was ordered by General Scott to take command of the Consolidated Battalion (Colonel Brady being too much exhausted by the loss of blood to command, though he declined leaving the field). My orders were to march the battalion

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to the top of the hill, and form there as a second line. They were formed in Lundy's lane, with the right towards the Niagara road; and their left in the rear of the captured artillery. This artillery and the American field artillery, under command of Major Hindman, occupied the summit of the eminence near the old church. Next on the right of his artillery was the 23d regiment, and then the 25th regiment on the extreme right. On the left of the artillery was the 21st regiment, with some other troops consolidated with it; then the 1st infantry. General Porter's volunteers occupied the extreme left. The army was thus situated when information was received, that the enemy were again advancing, and their near approach was discovered by a sheet of fire from both armies, who were not to exceed thirty yards from each other, and nearly in parallel lines.

General Scott having been absent from us a short time, for the purpose, as I supposed, of ascertaining the situation of the enemy, returned and asked me in a loud and animated voice, "are these troops prepared for the charge," and without giving me time to answer him, he added, "Yes, I know they are prepared for any thing," and he ordered me to form them in close column, left in front. This being done, General Scott ordered, "Forward and charge, my brave fellows," and leading the column himself, we passed through our line between the pieces of our artillery, and came in contact with the left of the enemy's line, a short distance past the centre, which immediately gave way. Owing however to the darkness of the night, our column had become in some degree irregular, we passed the extreme left of General Porter's volunteers, and formed our men in line. General Scott again ordered me to form the troops "in column at half distance, right in front." This order being executed, General Scott again led the column to the charge, with a view to turn the enemy's right flank, but finding that flank supported by a heavy second line, the charge was withdrawn. General Scott then passed through the American line, and joined Colonel Jesup with the 25th regiment on the right of that line, and was there wounded. The remainder of General Scott's brigade were again formed a small distance from the left of General Porter's volunteers. This was executed in the presence of Major-general Brown. He informs me that he was wounded at this period. In executing formation, I received the most essential services from Lieutenant Cushman, acting adjutant of the 9th regiment, and Lieutenant Crawford, adjutant of the 11th regiment. Lieutenant Brady of the 22d also rendered me the most substantial service on this occasion. In my opinion he has merited the particular attention of the War Department, as much as any officer in the army.

This formation being executed, Major Jones, assistant adjutant general, generously offered to ascertain the position of the contending armies, and inform me at what point the troops then under my command could be led into action to the greatest advantage, and without injury to our own men of other corps. Having been dismounted since the first charge, this offer was of the greatest service to me, and most gladly did I accept it. Major Jones then reconnoitred in the most gallant manner, under an incessant fire of musketry, the situation of the American line, and reported it to me. From this report I was induced to lead the troops under my command to the summit of the hill. Firing had now ceased on both sides. The thickest and most impenetrable darkness prevailed. All was still, and nothing to be heard but the groans of the wounded

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and dying. Moving forward to gain the summit of the hill, I was hailed by General Scott, who informed me of his wounds, and ordered me to push forward and join the 25th regiment, under the command of Colonel Jesup, who was also severely wounded. General Scott informed me, he was then compelled by the severity of his wounds to retire from the field, and ordered me in case the enemy should again return to the contest, to seek an opportunity to *charge*, and drive them from the field with the bayonet. In a short time after, General Brown hailed me, and inquired for General Scott. I informed him that he was wounded and gone from the field. He then informed me of his own wounds, and said he must also retire, and that I must look to General Ripley for orders, as the command of course devolved on him. I then moved on, and formed my men on the right of the 25th regiment, and the extreme right of the American line. Colonel Jesup and myself now had some conversation as to our own situation and that of the army. His command and my own were consolidated, and consisted of all the effective men of the first brigade remaining on the field, which I do not think exceeded 150 or 200 men, exclusive of officers. The men were exhausted with fatigue and the want of water. The enemy had retired from the field, but in what direction was not known. From the length of their lines, which we had during the action discovered by our own and their fire, we had reason to believe they were far superior to us in numbers. To refresh our men on the field would be hazardous in the extreme, and we were liable to be flanked on our left, and cut off from our camp at Chippewa. Under these circumstances, not knowing the situation of General Ripley's brigade or General Porter's corps, it was decidedly my opinion that the army ought to return to their camp at Chippewa. Colonel Jesup expressed to me the same opinion. He also directed me to take command of the troops of the first brigade, while he went in search of General Ripley for orders and information. Colonel Jesup suffering the most excruciating pain from his wounds, and it being excessively dark, was unable to find General Ripley, and soon returned to me, and again took command of the troops, and directed me to find General Ripley, if possible, and obtain orders and information as to the intended course of operations. I soon found General Ripley, and informed him of my wish, and my directions from Colonel Jesup. General Ripley inquired the strength and situation of the first brigade, and while doing so, a person rode up to General Ripley, with orders from General Brown (as I understood). General Ripley then told me he had received orders from Major-general Brown, to collect the wounded, and return with those, and the army, to the camp at Chippewa. General Ripley then gave me orders to the same effect, as it respected the first brigade. His information and order was immediately communicated by me to Colonel Jesup. He feeling that the action was over, and suffering severely from his wounds, did what most men would have sooner done: he gave to me the command of the troops of the first brigade, and retired from the field. He however continued near us, and probably would have joined us, had we been attacked. All the wounded who could be found on and near the field were put into wagons, which had been sent from the camp at Chippewa for that purpose, and sent off. General Ripley was very particular in his orders, that the movement of the troops should be conducted with regularity and order, and so far as came to my knowledge, his orders were strictly obeyed. Not a shot was fired from the enemy, and our

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troops moved in as good order, and with as much regularity *from, as to* the field, and arrived at Chippewa between one and two on the morning of the 26th.

During the whole of this night, as well during the action as after it, I was impressed with a high sense of the merit of General Ripley as a soldier, and the gallantry of his brigade in capturing the enemy's artillery. He manifested on that occasion, while in conversation with me, all that coolness and deliberation for which he has become distinguished, and which was so peculiarly necessary at a moment big with the fate of the army under his command, and the honour and glory of the American arms.

Having a hope that this statement may, at some day, appear to the world as an honest relation of facts, I should do great injustice to my feelings, did I not mention the gallant conduct of Captain Pentland, of the 22d regiment. Soon after the commencement of the action, he brought his company (which had been the advance of General Scott's brigade) into action, on my right. This was done in the most *brave* and soldierly manner. His example and conversation had the most beneficial effect during the warmest of the action, and contributed greatly to keep the men steady and active in their duty.

As to the 9th regiment, which on that occasion I had the honour to command, I cannot make particular distinction as to the merits of individuals. Every man in the regiment, from the highest to the lowest, gave me the most perfect satisfaction. They maintained their ground against an overwhelming superiority of force, in a manner which has seldom been excelled for gallantry in any age or country. It has been stated that their numbers were but 150 rank and file when they entered the field; and it will appear from the official return of killed and wounded, that 128, including every officer with the regiment, were included in that report. It is due to the memory of Lieutenant Burghardt, who was killed at the close of the action, to say that he particularly distinguished himself, by continuing to do his duty in the most able manner, after being severely wounded in the left side, at the commencement of the action, although he bled freely, and was advised by me several times to go to the rear, he declined to do so, and continued with me until he was shot through the breast in the last charge.

On the morning of the 26th, at about 7 or 8 o'clock, Colonel Gardner, adjutant-general, came to me with an order to make a field report, stating the strength of the first brigade, and to prepare them to march, and take possession of the field of battle immediately. I immediately took measures to ascertain the strength of the several regiments. The 9th regiment I counted myself, and recollect its effective force was 64 men. The strength of the other regiments I do not recollect. My impression now is, that the whole strength of the brigade, exclusive of attendants on the wounded, and the details for guard then on duty, did not exceed 5 or 600 men. The troops were formed, and took up the line of march at about nine o'clock. After crossing the Chippewa, I received orders from General Ripley, to take possession of the works at Chippewa with the first brigade, which was done by bridging the ditch on the south side of the breastwork, thereby making a platform for the men to stand upon.

From what I saw of our forces, which I do not think at that time exceeded 15 or 1600 men; and from what I had seen of the enemy's force the preceding

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evening, *I did think it the most consummate folly to attempt to regain possession of the field of battle*—and every officer with whom I conversed, among whom were many of the first distinction, *expressed their astonishment at such an attempt*, and their surprise that every exertion was not made immediately to take up the line of march for Fort Erie. The troops however re-crossed the Chippewa at about 12 o'clock, and took up the line of march for Fort Erie. We arrived and encamped in good order, in the field opposite the Black Rock ferry, on the evening of the 26th July.

The march from Chippewa to Fort Erie, was made in the most perfect order, nor was any thing left behind us which could be of any advantage to the enemy.

With the highest esteem and respect, I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

(Signed) H. LEAVENWORTH, *Colonel U. S. Army.*

No. X.

TESTIMONY OF CAPTAIN M'DONALD.

William M'Donald, Captain in the 19th regiment of United States Infantry, being produced and sworn as a witness by General Ripley—Testified,

That in the campaign of 1814, before and during the battle of Bridgewater, near Niagara, he was acting aid to Brigadier-general Ripley. On the morning of the 25th of July, the army under the command of Major-general Brown, was encamped on the upper side of Chippewa Creek; many of the men were that day engaged in washing, and about half an hour before sun-set, were still out, when a firing was heard, which they in camp ascribed to General Scott's being engaged with the enemy, as he had marched out with his brigade about two hours before.

When General Scott first marched out, it was the general impression that he had done so for the purpose of parade and drill. Our army at this time consisted of two brigades of regular troops, commanded by Brigadier-generals Scott and Ripley, and a small corps of 5 or 600 volunteers under General Porter.

The total of General Ripley's brigade may have amounted to about 900: the effectives from 7 to 800. The day before at Queenstown heights, he recollected hearing General Scott say that *his* brigade contained about the same number—perhaps rather less.

About the 16th of July, they had intelligence that General Rial, of the British army, lay at 10 and 12 mile Creek, with 1500 men. According to the general impression, he had a fortified encampment—to the best of his knowledge no precise information was received of the force and position of the enemy between the 16th and 25th of July.

On the day last mentioned, the proportion of those who formed the washing parties and scattered men of the camp, amounted in the second brigade alone, to 150 or 200 men. There were parties from the other brigade also, but he could not state the number.

When General Scott moved out in the afternoon, no idea was entertained that there would be an action, nor had they any knowledge of the vicinity of the enemy—the first information they had was from the firing.

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In the order of the encampment, the first brigade under General Scott rested on the Chippewa; the second commanded by General Ripley, about two hundred yards distant, with their front to the Niagara, and at right angles to the first. The encampment embraced the angle formed by the Niagara and Chippewa, which at that place formed a junction. Across the Chippewa was a bridge, over which General Scott had passed and advanced about two miles, when the firing of musketry commenced. Immediately on hearing it, General Ripley ordered his brigade to be formed. By the time this was effected, the report of artillery was distinguished. Soon after, orders were received from Major-general Brown, through some of his staff, for the second brigade to advance and reinforce General Scott. General Ripley immediately, on receiving the order, marched with his brigade, across the Chippewa, and when about half a mile in the rear of the scene of action, it being then near dusk, despatched the witness in advance to Major-general Brown, to ascertain the situation of the enemy, and what point he should march to, and form his brigade.

The witness, on his way to General Brown, met his aid, Captain Spencer, proceeding with orders to General Ripley, to form his brigade in the skirts of a wood on the right of General Scott's. The brigade accordingly continued to advance, and was in the act of forming the line, when General Ripley remarked to Colonel Miller and other commanders that, to form a line in that place would be of no consequence, as they could not advance in *line*, through the woods—and they were not then within striking distance of the enemy.—He added, that he would take upon himself the responsibility of moving further on towards the enemy, before he formed. The witness left the brigade for a few minutes to apprise General Brown of this movement, but did not find him, and immediately rejoined General Ripley.

The march from the encampment to the scene of action was prompt and rapid, and the brigade for one half the distance was on a long trot to keep with the General's horse.—While passing the woods in pursuance of General Ripley's determination to advance, the fire of the enemy was very heavy, and their shot and shells fell about us in great quantities, but was more particularly directed at General Scott's brigade on the left, which the second was then in the act of passing. The impression was, that the first brigade was at this time suffering very severely from the continued and destructive fire poured in upon them, and General Ripley in consequence remarked to the witness and Colonel Miller, that he would detach the 21st regiment, commanded by the latter, to carry the enemy's artillery, adding, that unless this was done, they would destroy our whole force, or compel us to fall back. It was then completely dark, and though it was known their artillery was posted on an eminence, we had no knowledge of their number, or how they were supported. The distance of General Scott's line from the enemy, must have been between three and four hundred yards at that time, and there was then no firing of musketry from it.

After General Ripley's suggestion to Colonel Miller, the latter immediately made dispositions to execute it—displayed his regiment by forming a line on the left of the road nearly fronting the enemy's artillery. General Ripley, at the same time he gave the order for the 21st to storm the battery by an attack in front, directed the 23d to form in column, and march against the enemy's

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flank. About the time the 21st was preparing to move as directed, the witness met General Brown, who enquired for General Ripley, and asked what dispositions he had made; the witness informed him, he approved of it, appeared quite elated with the intelligence, and accompanied him to General Ripley. Some conversation took place between them, and in a very few minutes both battalions were in motion; the 21st commanded by Colonel Miller, the 23d by Major M'Farland, but led by General Ripley in person.—While the 23d was advancing to operate against the enemy's flank, and about 150 yards distance from the height, they received a fire in front from perhaps 50 or 60 musketry, which threw them into confusion for a few minutes, and caused them to fall back about 50 or 60 yards. The regiment however speedily recovered and formed into column, sooner than he has ever known one formed for parade—though perhaps not with equal accuracy. Some difficulty occurred in forming the platoons, in consequence of their having been broken; but their numbers were guessed at, and wheeled into column, with a view to despatch and to facilitate the movement. The whole was accomplished under the particular direction and immediate agency of Brigadier-general Ripley. His exertions to effect it were very great, and no one could be more active than he was. The whole interval from the moment the fire was received in front, until the actual re-organization of the column in readiness to advance, did not exceed five minutes. They then marched directly, and displayed upon the enemy's flank. While this was performing, Colonel Miller had advanced pursuant to his orders against the front, and succeeded in carrying the enemy's battery, consisting of seven pieces of artillery; to wit, two brass twenty-fours and smaller ones. Having passed the position where the artillery had been planted, Colonel Miller again formed his line facing the enemy, and engaged them within twenty paces distance. There appeared a perfect sheet of fire between the two lines. While the 21st was in this situation, the 23d attacked the enemy's flank, and advanced within twenty paces of it, before the first volley was discharged; a measure adopted by command of General Ripley, that the fire might be effectual and more completely destructive. The movement compelled the enemy's flank to fall back immediately by descending the hill out of sight; upon which the firing ceased. Prior to the fire of the 23d, the enemy were closing in upon Colonel Miller's command, which appeared to be hard pressed, and as he conceived was recoiling; the force opposed amounting to double his number; but by the prompt aid of the 23d, the heights were gained, and cleared of the enemy. After this was achieved, the 21st and 23d formed in line by order, and under the direction of General Ripley, leaving the batteries which had been carried in the rear. While thus circumstanced, a detachment of the 1st regiment, which consisted of from 100 to 200 men, and had remained in the rear, joined them on the heights, and was by General Ripley formed into the line. He could not say what had detained the above detachment so long from the scene of action.

Shortly after the line was formed, General Ripley sent him to ask General Brown whether the captured artillery should not be moved off the field towards Chippewa. The witness met General Brown ascending the hill, and delivered his message: The latter replied, there were matters of more importance to attend to at that moment, and he should see General Ripley himself. He appeared highly elated, and rode with him to General Ripley; but the wit-

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ness did not hear the conversation which passed. The heights thus gained, were a very commanding position, and contained all the enemy's artillery, capable of *enfilading* in every direction. While the second brigade thus occupied the heights, General Scott's brigade was about three hundred yards distant, and no enemy between them. The firing from it had by this time nearly ceased.

After General Brown's interview with General Ripley, he left the hill, as the witness understood, in search of General Scott. The 25th regiment then joined the second brigade, was formed on the right, nearly at right angles to the 23d regiment, its left resting on Towson's artillery, and disposed so as to flank the enemy in case they attacked. The artillery under command of Major Hindman and Captain Towson, had come up but a few moments before, in consequence of General Ripley's request communicated by the witness to Major Hindman, and complied with by him.

While General Ripley's line was thus formed on the eminence, the enemy advanced upon it in considerable force—out-flanking its right and left, and far exceeding it in numbers. On finding them approaching, General Ripley ordered the brigade to reserve its fire until the enemy's bayonets should touch, in preference to firing first. This was done with a view to observe the flash of their muskets, and to take aim by the assistance of their light. The order was obeyed: the enemy advanced within ten or twelve yards of our right, composed of the 23d regiment. After receiving their fire, we returned it: the action then became general: a tremendous conflict ensued for about twenty minutes; at the expiration of which, the enemy gave way, and again fell back out of sight. We having much the advantage of the ground, the enemy generally fired over our heads, but the continual blaze of light was such as to enable us distinctly to see their buttons. An interval of half an hour followed, when the enemy advanced a second time, nearly in the same manner, attacked precisely in the same point, but did not approach so near, before the firing commenced. Our left had by this time been thrown forward by order of General Ripley, and the line formed nearly parallel, with the addition of General Porter's volunteers on the left, and General Scott with the three remaining battalions on the right; but the latter were so situated, as not to be engaged. The contest was more severe, and he thinks, longer continued than the last. The same precautions were enjoined by General Ripley, with respect to his men reserving their fire, and the reception of the enemy was equally warm. Some part of our right and left gave way; but our centre, composed of the 21st regiment, stood firm, with the exception of some platoons which also fell back: the enemy were repulsed, and retired again from the contest. General Ripley, in person, rallied the detachments which gave way on the right, and succeeded in bringing them back into action before the retreat of the enemy. An interval, not to exceed three quarters of an hour, ensued; during which, all was darkness and silence; scarce interrupted by a breath of air. The men had neither water nor whiskey to refresh themselves, after the fatigues they had endured.

The Court adjourned to Wednesday, 15th March, 1815, 11 o'clock, A. M.

Troy, March 15, 1815.

The Court convened pursuant to adjournment—the same Members present.

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The examination of Captain *M'Donald* being resumed.—He stated, That at the expiration of the interval last mentioned, the enemy advanced a third time to recover their artillery. It was our impression that they had been reinforced, and this was confirmed by prisoners who were taken at the time. The advance of the enemy was similar to the two preceding ones, and the fire was again opened by their line. General Ripley's brigade reserved their fire as before. The duration and order of the conflict—its result, and the retreat of the enemy, were in all essential points, similar to the last.

In every attack, the enemy were repulsed. General Ripley made every possible exertion to inspire and encourage his troops; exposed his person during the hottest of the fire of the enemy; and as he considered, more than was necessary. The witness several times endeavoured to prevail upon him to retire, but without effect. His perseverance was unremitted; sometimes acting as file closer as well as commander. He gave his orders with perfect coolness and deliberation, and attended as far as possible, to their proper execution. The witness never knew him more collected.

General Ripley's position was never more than ten or twelve paces in the rear of his line. He received two balls through his hat, and his horse was wounded during the several encounters. He, Lieutenant-colonel Nicholas, and the witness, were the only mounted officers of the second brigade.

After the last attack, the second brigade for three fourths, or one half an hour, remained on the hill with very little change of position: its left was perhaps thrown back. In the interim, General Ripley despatched the witness with orders to General Porter, to send fifty or one hundred volunteers of his command, directing them to report to Colonel M'Rae, and remove the captured artillery from the heights to the camp on the Chippewa. He delivered the orders, saw the volunteers detached, and marched on the hill.—Owing to there being no drag-ropes for the artillery, no horses on the ground, and the guns being unlimbered, it was found impracticable to remove them, and the volunteers were then employed in removing the wounded. Prior to the attempt to remove the captured pieces, he saw no artillery corps on the ground, they having retired in consequence of their ammunition being expended and some of their caissons blown up, by the enemy's rockets and shells

On the return of the witness, after communicating the preceding order to General Porter, preparations were made for the second brigade to retire, agreeable to orders from General Brown, as General Ripley at the time informed him. He also stated that Generals Brown and Scott were both wounded and had left the field. Our army accordingly retired unmolested, and it was his impression at the time, that the whole column did not exceed 700 when the retrograde movement was made. It was understood that vast numbers were employed in carrying off the wounded. Others had given out for want of water. When the second brigade marched to the field of battle, they met a considerable number of the first brigade returning to camp, some slightly wounded, and others carried off by those who were uninjured. Many wounded were left on the ground after the battle, they being scattered over a considerable extent, and the night dark, it was impossible to find them. He does not think any wounded of Brigadier-general Ripley's brigade were left, unless some who attempted to get off without assistance, and failed.

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When General Ripley gave the order for the army to retire, he directed the several commanders of battalions to collect all the wounded; and in the interval before retiring, he used every exertion to have this order properly executed.

While the army was moving back and afterwards, he knows of no other measures being taken to furnish horses, supply drag-ropes, and bring off the artillery which remained on the heights, with the exception of the smaller ones, which had been rolled down the hill.

After 12 o'clock at night the army regained their camp. The witness added, that the pickets and washing parties were not brought up, nor at all engaged during the action. Shortly after the return to camp, about one o'clock, Major-general Brown directed Brigadier-general Ripley.*————* The General Order dissolving the Court, which follows, was at this period of the investigation, received by the President, and no further testimony was heard.

I certify that the foregoing is a true copy of the minutes and proceedings of the Court of Enquiry of which Major-general H. Dearborn was President, so far as the Court proceeded in the investigation of the subject matter enjoined by the General Order constituting said Court.

(Signed) EVERT A. BANCKER, *Judge Advocate.*

The undersigned officers, who served in General Ripley's brigade at the battle of Bridgewater, do certify on honour, that the narrative given in the foregoing minutes of Captain M'Donald's testimony, corresponds with our knowledge and recollection of the conduct of General Ripley, and the operations of his brigade during that action.

Albany, March 17th, 1815.

(Signed) N. S. CLARKE, *Capt. and Brig. Maj. 2d Brigade.*
Lieut. JNO. P. LIVINGSTON, *Adjutant 23d Infant.*
JOHN W. HOLDING, *Lieut. and Brig. Maj. to Gen. Miller, and Adj. of the 21st Reg. of Infant. at the Battle of Bridgewater.*

GENERAL ORDER.

Adjutant and Inspector-General's Office, 4th March, 1815.

The Court of Enquiry, of which Major-general Dearborn is President, which was ordered to investigate the conduct of Brigadier-general Ripley, during the last campaign, is discharged from that service:

The Congress of the United States having approved his conduct by a highly complimentary resolve, and the President being pleased to express his favourable opinion of the military character of General Ripley, he will honourably resume his command. By Order,

(Signed) D. PARKER, *A. and I. General.*

No. XI.

TESTIMONY OF BRIGADIER-GENERAL MILLER.

Fort Erie, Sept. 4th, 1814.

Sir.—I improve the opportunity which a short indulgence from duty allows, of hastily communicating to you the occurrences of the action of the 25th, and

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the present situation of the army, which is now closely invested by the enemy at this post.

On the 25th General Scott was detached from our position at Chippewa by General Brown, with directions *to occupy Queenstown.* He marched with his own brigade, and in two hours the sound of his musketry informed us that he was closely engaged with the enemy. At this time, the 2d brigade and other corps were quietly remaining in camp. All immediately marched, without calling in our pickets and other parties, to the support of the 1st brigade.—We found them at the distance of three miles, gallantly supporting a most unequal conflict. Our arrival was a little past sun-set, and soon changed the aspect of the field.

The enemy's artillery was advantageously posted upon an eminence commanding the plain. The destruction which it dealt through our ranks, suggested the imperious necessity of carrying the height. *This General Ripley directed to be done with his own brigade*—the 21st regiment* advanced and charged the battery in front: he led the 23d upon their *flank*—both these regiments present, were less than 700 men. *The movement was performed in the most heroic manner by both regiments*, and in a few minutes we found ourselves in possession of the whole park, consisting of seven pieces, and the enemy was routed in every direction. But his line was soon formed in rear of the artillery, and several most desperate charges were made to regain the ground and artillery, from which he had been driven: he was repulsed as often as the attempt was renewed, with great slaughter. *During two or three charges the contest was carried on by the 2d brigade.* General Porter soon brought up his command to support it: and Lieutenant-colonel Jesup, with the 25th regiment, also arrived at the same point. The action closed at 11 o'clock, and we found ourselves in complete possession of the field, the enemy having been driven at every point. *We remained near an hour, when General Brown ordered General Ripley to retire to the camp—this movement was effected in perfect order, but through some unfortunate circumstance, the trophies of our victory, the artillery, were not carried off. As General Brown remained in command upon the field until we retired, I do not consider General Ripley in the least accountable for this neglect, more especially as I understood the order was to retire immediately.* Some have shown a disposition to detract from the merit of General Ripley, and to charge upon him *the commission of all the errors which occurred.* I am, however, fully satisfied of his good conduct generally as an officer, as well as of his discernment and ability in the field on this day.

* General Miller at this time commanded the 21st regiment, and led it to this charge.

No. XII.

Extract of a Letter from Major-general Brown to the Secretary of War.

You are already apprised that the army had on the 25th ult. taken a position at Chippewa. About noon of that day, Colonel Swift, who was posted at Lewistown, advised me by express, that the enemy appeared in considerable

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force in Queenstown and on its heights; that four of the enemy's fleet had arrived during the preceding night, and were then laying near Fort Niagara, and that a number of boats were in view, moving up the strait. Within a few minutes after this intelligence had been received, I was further informed by Captain Denmon, of the quarter-master's department, that the enemy was landing at Lewistown, and that our baggage and stores at Schlosser, and on their way thither, were in danger of immediate capture. It is proper here to mention, that having received advices as late as the 20th from General Gaines that our fleet was then in port, and the Commodore sick, we ceased to look for co-operation from that quarter, and determined to disincumber ourselves of baggage, and march directly for Burlington heights. To mask this intention, and to draw from Schlosser a small supply of provisions, I fell back upon Chippewa. As this arrangement, under the increased force of the enemy, left much at hazard on our own side of the Niagara, and as it appeared by the before stated information, that the enemy was about to avail himself of it, I conceived that the most effectual method of recalling him from this object, was to put myself in motion towards Queenstown. General Scott, with the 1st brigade, Towson's artillery, and all the dragoons and mounted men, were accordingly put in march on the road leading thither, with orders to report if the enemy appeared, and to call for assistance if that was necessary. On the General's arrival at the Falls, he learned that the enemy was in force directly in his front—a narrow piece of woods alone intercepting his view of them. Waiting only to give this information, he advanced upon them. By the time assistant Adjutant-general [Jones] had delivered his message, the action began, and before the remaining part of the division had crossed the Chippewa, it had become close and general between the advance corps. Though General Ripley with the 2d brigade, Major Hindman with the corps of artillery, and General Porter at the head of his command, had respectively pressed forward with ardour, it was not less than an hour before they were brought to sustain General Scott, during which time his command most skilfully and gallantly maintained the conflict. Upon my arrival, I found that the General had passed the wood and engaged the enemy at Queenstown road, and on the ground to the left of it, with the 9th, 11th, and 22d regiments, and Towson's artillery. The 25th had been thrown to the right, to be governed by circumstances. Apprehending that these corps were much exhausted, and knowing that they had suffered severely, I determined to interpose a new line with the advancing troops, and thus disengage General Scott, and hold his brigade in reserve.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

Having been for some time wounded, and being a good deal exhausted by loss of blood, it became my wish to devolve the command on General Scott, and retire from the field; but on enquiry, I had the misfortune to learn that he was disabled by wounds; I therefore kept my post, and had the satisfaction to see the enemy's last effort repulsed. I now consigned the command to General Ripley.

While retiring from the field, I saw and felt that the victory was complete on our part, if proper measures were promptly adopted to secure it. The exhaustion of the men was however such, as made some refreshment necessary.—They particularly required water. I was myself extremely sensible of the want of this necessary article. I therefore believed it proper that General

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Ripley and the troops should return to camp, after bringing off the dead, the wounded, and the artillery; and in this I saw no difficulty, as the enemy had entirely ceased to act. Within an hour after my arrival in camp, I was informed that General Ripley had returned without annoyance and in good order. I now sent for him, and after giving him my reasons for the measure I was about to adopt, ordered him to put the troops into the best possible condition; to give to them the necessary refreshment; to take with him the pickets and camp guards, and every other description of force; to put himself on the field of battle as the day dawned, and there to meet and beat the enemy if he again appeared. To this order he made no objection, and I relied upon its execution. It was not executed. I feel most sensibly how inadequate are my powers in speaking of the troops, to do justice either to their merits or to my own sense of them. Under abler direction, they might have done more and better.

No. XIII.

TESTIMONY OF ADJUTANT LIVINGSTON.

Sacket's Harbour, 6th March, 1815.

On the night of the 25th July, 1814, at the battle of Bridgewater, Major Austin, aid to Major-general Brown, gave orders to Brigade-major Clarke and myself to communicate to General Ripley that Generals Brown and Scott were wounded, and the command devolved on General Ripley; and that it was General Brown's orders that General Ripley should march the troops from the field of action to the mouth of Chippewa Creek, where the army had encamped previous to the battle, without delay; and if he was attacked in making his retreat, he should defend himself. This order we received at the White House, about half a mile from where the battle was fought. We accordingly made all haste to inform you of this order, which order Brigade-major Clarke communicated to you, Sir, in my presence. Previous however to your receiving this order, there were, I should say, ten or twelve wagons going to the field of battle, to carry off the wounded: they had arrived as far as the White House, when they were ordered not to proceed any further, but to return to camp. I cannot say who gave the order for them not to proceed any further.

Your most obedient, most humble servant,

(Signed) JNO. P. LIVINGSTON, *Adjutant 23d Inf.*

No. XIV.

COLONEL HINDMAN'S STATEMENT.

After the enemy was repulsed at Bridgewater the last time by our troops on the hill, I rode to the rear to bring up my spare ammunition wagons. On my return with them, I met General Brown, who gave me orders to the following effect: "Collect your artillery as well as you can, and retire immediately, we shall all march to camp." He observed that we had done as much as we could

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do; that nearly all our officers were killed or wounded; that he himself was wounded, and he thought it best to retire to camp. I proceeded to execute my orders—the firing had ceased.—When upon the hill with the troops, I inquired for General Ripley, to communicate the orders I had received. I did not see General Ripley at that time.

Immediately after this, I turned my attention to getting off the enemy's brass 24 pounder, and for this purpose detached Lieutenant Fontaine, of the artillery, with orders to take it from the field, and afterwards ordered Lieutenant Kineard, of the artillery, to assist him. I then rode to the bottom of the hill, and after great difficulty, procured some horses, and at the same time ordered several wagons to the top of the hill, to bring off the wounded. On my return to the gun, some of the wagons having previously reached the hill, I discovered the gun and wagons in possession of the enemy; some of the men and horses were captured—I left the field at the same time. When I reached the troops on their return to camp, Lieutenant Fontaine informed me, that I had left him but a few minutes, before the enemy charged his little party at the gun, and made them all prisoners. He escaped by dashing through their ranks on horseback, it being dark.

In my opinion, not more than fifteen hundred men could have been collected in our camp for battle, on the morning of the 26th of July.

(Signed) J. HINDMAN, *Brevet Lieut. Col. U. S. A.*

No. XV.

See Appendix, No. XII.

No. XVI.

LIEUTENANT TAPPAN'S STATEMENT.

On the return of the army to camp, the corps to which I belonged was stationed at the bridge on the opposite side of the Chippewa, to guard that pass from surprise. Just after the dawn of day on the next morning, the army was put in motion; but the sun had acquired a considerable elevation, before our column had taken up a line of march towards the ground occupied by us the preceding night. In this interval justice compels me to say, that your exertions were unremitted to arrange, concentrate, and precipitate your force upon the enemy, with the least possible delay. A variety of causes, however, tended to retard the fulfilment of your designs and wishes; among which the death or disability of many of our ablest officers, the extreme fatigue of the troops, and the dispersed and deranged state of the different corps, may be enumerated. Corroborative of the latter estimation, I shall remark, that, of the company which I commanded, consisting of forty-five effectives on the field, of

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which seventeen only were killed or wounded, I was able to muster but nine, on the return of our regiment to Chippewa bridge the preceding night.

Having proceeded about half a mile on the Queenstown road, I was ordered (by General Ripley) in conjunction with Lieutenant Riddle, of the 15th infantry, to proceed with our respective companies through the woods on our left, advance towards the enemy, and reconnoitre his position, strength, and movements. His order was executed. On unmasking from the woods, we discovered the enemy posted on a height, about a mile in advance of the ground where we left him. His whole battery was planted on an eminence upon the right of the road; his left extended in line, so far as I could see, through an orchard towards the Niagara, by which that flank was undoubtedly protected. His right was in column near the battery, in force, apparently more than sufficient when displayed into line, to extend to a wood, difficult to be penetrated. The column and line of the enemy was in British artillery and infantry uniform. I saw no dragoons, (a few *videttes* and *patroles* excepted,) no Glengarians, militia, nor Indians. The enemy's numbers, which I endeavoured to ascertain with as great degree of comparative accuracy as possible, must have been at least, one quarter, or one third part, greater than your whole effective force. His position was commanding, his flanks well covered, his centre impenetrable, unassailable, and it would, in my humble opinion, have been an act of rashness bordering on insanity, to have attempted an attack on a *veteran foe*, possessing every advantage, excepting zeal, intelligence, and intrepidity.

(Signed) SAMUEL TAPPAN, *1st Lieut. 23d Reg. U. S. Inf.*

No. XVII.

Extract of a Letter from Lieutenant-general Drummond to Earl Bathurst, dated Upper Canada, near Niagara Falls, July 27th, 1814.

I embarked on board his Majesty's schooner Netley, at York, on Sunday evening, the 24th inst. and reached Niagara at day-break the following morning. Finding from Lieutenant-colonel Tucker that Major-general Riall was understood to be moving towards the Falls of Niagara to support the advance of his division, which he had pushed on to that place on the preceding evening, I ordered Lieutenant-colonel Morrison, with the 89th regiment and a detachment of the Royals and King's, drawn from Fort George and Mississaga, to proceed to the same point, in order that, with the united force, I might act against the enemy (posted at Street's Creek, with his advance at Chippewa) on my arrival, if it should be found expedient. I ordered Lieutenant-colonel Tucker, at the same time, to proceed on the right bank of the river, with three hundred of the 41st, and about two hundred of the Royal Scots, and a body of Indian warriors, supported (on the river) by a party of armed seamen, under Captain Dobbs, Royal navy. The object of this movement was to disperse or capture a body of the enemy which was encamped at Lewistown. Some unavoidable delay having occurred in the march of the troops up the right bank,

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the enemy had moved off previous to Lieutenant-colonel Tucker's arrival. I have to express myself satisfied with the exertions of that officer.

Having refreshed the troops at Queenstown, and having brought across the 41st, Royals, and Indians, I sent back the 41st and 100th regiments to form the garrisons of the Forts George, Mississaga, and Niagara, under Lieutenant-colonel Tucker, and moved, with the 89th, and detachments of the Royals and King's, and light company of the 41st, in all about 800 men, to join Major-general Riall's division at the Falls.

When arrived within a few miles of that position, I met a report from Major-general Riall, that the enemy was advancing in great force. I immediately pushed on, and joined the head of Lieutenant-colonel Morrison's column, just as it reached the road leading towards the Beaver Dam over the summit of the hill at Lundy's lane. Instead of the whole of Major-general Riall's division, which I expected to have found occupying this position, I found it almost in the occupation of the enemy, whose columns were within 600 yards of the top of the hill, and the surrounding woods filled with his light troops. The advance of Major-general Riall's division, consisting of the Glengary light infantry and incorporated militia, having commenced their retreat upon Fort George, I countermanded these corps, and formed the 89th regiment and the Royal Scots detachments, and 41st light companies, in the rear of the hill, their left resting on the great road; my two twenty-four pounder brass field guns a little advanced in front of the centre on the summit of the hill; the Glengary light infantry on the right, the battalion of incorporated militia, and the detachment of the King's regiment on the left of the great road; the squadron of 19th light dragoons in the rear of the left on the road. I had scarcely completed this formation, when the whole front was warmly and closely engaged. The enemy's principal efforts were directed against our left and centre. After repeated attacks, the troops on the left were partially forced back, and the enemy gained a momentary possession of the road. This gave him, however, no material advantage, as the troops which had been forced back formed in rear of the 89th regiment, fronting the road, and securing the flank. It was during this short interval that Major-general Riall, having received a severe wound, was intercepted as he was passing to the rear, by a party of the enemy's cavalry, and made prisoner. In the centre, the repeated and determined attacks of the enemy were met by the 89th regiment, the detachments of the Royals and King's, and the light company 41st regiment, with the most perfect steadiness and intrepid gallantry, and the enemy was constantly repulsed with very heavy loss. In so determined a manner were these attacks directed against our guns, that our artillerymen were bayoneted by the enemy in the act of loading, and the muzzles of the enemy's guns were advanced within a few yards of our's. The darkness of the night, during this extraordinary conflict, occasioned several uncommon incidents: our troops having for a moment been pushed back, some of our guns remained for a few minutes in the enemy's hands; they were, however, not only quickly recovered, but the two pieces, a six pounder and a five and a half inch howitzer, which the enemy had brought up, were captured by us, together with several tumbrils; and in limbering up our guns at one period, one of the enemy's six pounders was put, by mistake, upon a limber of our's, and one of our six pounders limbered on one of his; by which means the pieces were exchanged; and thus, though

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we captured two of his guns, yet, as he obtained one of our's, we have gained only one gun.

About nine o'clock (the action having commenced at six) there was a short intermission of firing, during which it appears the enemy was employed in bringing up the whole of his remaining force, and he shortly afterwards renewed his attack with fresh troops, but was every where repulsed with equal gallantry and success. About this period the remainder of Major-general Riall's division, which had been ordered to retire on the advance of the enemy, consisting of the 103d regiment, under Colonel Scott; the head-quarter division of the Royal Scots; the head-quarter division of the 8th or King's; flank companies 104th; some detachments of militia, under Lieutenant-colonel Hamilton, inspecting field-officer, joined the troops engaged; and I placed them in a second line, with the exception of the Royal Scots, and flank companies 104th, with which I prolonged my front line on the right, where I was apprehensive of the enemy's out-flanking me. The enemy's efforts to carry the hill were continued until about midnight, when he had suffered so severely from the superior steadiness and discipline of his Majesty's troops, that he gave up the contest, and retreated with great precipitation to his camp beyond the Chippewa. On the following day he abandoned his camp, threw the greatest part of his baggage, camp-equipage, and provisions, into the Rapids; and having set fire to Street's Mills and destroyed the bridge at Chippewa, continued his retreat in great disorder towards Fort Erie. My light troops, cavalry, and Indians, are detached in pursuit, and to harass his retreat, which I doubt not he will continue until he reaches his own shore.

The loss sustained by the enemy in this severe action cannot be estimated at less than fifteen hundred men, including several hundreds of prisoners left in our hands; his two commanding Generals, Brown and Scott, are said to be wounded; his whole force, which has never been rated at less than five thousand, having been engaged. Enclosed I have the honour to transmit a return of our loss, which has been very considerable. The number of troops under my command did not for the first three hours exceed sixteen hundred men; the addition of the troops under Colonel Scott did not increase it to more than two thousand eight hundred of every description.

No. XVIII.

Extract of a Letter from General Winder to the Secretary of War, dated July 9th, 1814.

The objects of the command which has been conferred upon me, have, consequently, since I received it, occupied my serious consideration.

The utmost regular force, which it is probable can, in the present state of affairs, be placed at my command, including the force necessary for garrisoning the several forts, will not exceed 1000, and some weeks will necessarily elapse before the detachments from Virginia and Carlisle will reach my district: The detachments of the 36th and 38th are therefore the only troops that

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I can expect to have in the field in the mean time; and when those other detachments join, the utmost field force will be seven to eight hundred.

In conversation with you at Washington, I understood the idea, at present entertained relative to the auxiliary militia force proposed for the district, to be, that it shall be drafted and designated, but that no part of it is to be called into the field until the hostile force, now in the Chesapeak, shall be reinforced to such an extent, as to render it probable that a serious attack is contemplated.

The enemy's fleet has now spent more than a twelvemonth in the waters of the Chesapeak; and during that time has visited almost every river falling into the bay; and must be presumed to have such accurate information, that whatever expedition may be destined to these waters will have a definitive object, to the execution of which, on its arrival, it will proceed with the utmost promptitude and despatch. Should Washington, Baltimore, or Annapolis, be their object, what possible chance will there be of collecting a force, after the arrival of the enemy, to interpose between them and either of those places? They can proceed, without dropping anchor, to within three hours' rowing and marching of Baltimore; within less of Annapolis; and upon arriving off South river, can debark, and be in Washington in a day and a half. This celerity of movement, on their part, is not probable, owing to adverse weather and other causes; but if the enemy has been active, while in our waters, to acquire a knowledge of our country, of which there can be no doubt, and should be favoured with weather on the arrival of reinforcements, he can be in Washington, Baltimore, or Annapolis, in four days from entering the Capes. But allowing liberally for all causes of detention, he can be in either of those places in ten days from his arrival. What time will this allow us to hear of his arrival, to disseminate through the intricate and winding channels, the various orders to the militia, for them to assemble, have their officers designated, their arms, accoutrements, and ammunition, delivered, the necessary supplies provided, or for the commanding officer to learn the different corps and detachments, so as to issue orders with the promptitude and certainty so necessary in active operations? If the enemy's force should be strong, which, if it come at all, it will be, sufficient numbers of the militia could not be warned and run together, even as a disorderly crowd, without arms, ammunition, or organization, before the enemy would already have given his blow.

Would it not then be expedient to increase the force of my command, by immediately calling out a portion of the militia; so that, by previously selecting the best positions for defence, and increasing, as far as possible, the natural advantages of these positions, the advance of the enemy might be retarded, his force crippled, and time and opportunity thus gained for drawing together whatever other resources of defence might be competent to resist the enemy. The small force of regulars will be incompetent to accomplish any material works at favourable positions for strengthening the defences, and to supply the various vidette parties, which it will be necessary to station on the prominent points of the bay, to watch the enemy, and communicate his movements with the greatest possible despatch.

Allow me, Sir, respectfully to propose that four thousand militia be called out without delay; I propose to station these in equal proportions in the most eligible positions, between South river and Washington, and in the vicinity of

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Baltimore. Baltimore could not be aided by a force stationed b
river and Washington, unless a force were on the spot to retard t
the enemy until it could arrive, and so with respect to the force
in co-operating with that intended to defend Washington. Each
the other if of this magnitude, and it appears to me, that with n
means actually in the field and ready for instant action, no hope
tained of opposing the enemy in assailing either of those places.

I shall proceed to Annapolis to-morrow, and have but little do
Executive of Maryland will cordially co-operate in affording such
may be advisable to call for, and I beg you will permit me to pro
such other militia force as the President may think proper, imme
called out.

I sent an order from Washington for the detachments of the 3
to move up to the head of South river, where I propose to meet t
upon the most eligible spot for the camp intended to defend Wash

You will please, therefore, to direct any communication to me t
which will enable me to make the requisite arrangements with th
of Maryland at once.

No. XIX.

*Extract of a Letter from Major-general Ross to Earl Bathurst, one
principal Secretaries of State, dated Tonnant, in the Patuxent, A
1814.*

My Lord.—I have the honour to communicate to your Lordship,
night of the 24th inst. after defeating the army of the United Stat
day, the troops under my command entered and took possession of
Washington.

It was determined between Sir A. Cochrane and myself, to disc
army at the village of Benedict, on the right bank of the Patuxent
intention of co-operating with Rear-admiral Cockburn in an attack
tilla of the enemy's gun-boats, under the command of Commodo
On the 20th inst. the army commenced its march, having landed th
day without opposition; on the 21st it reached Nottingham, and on the
ed on to Upper Marlborough, a few miles distant from Pig Point on
ent, where Admiral Cockburn fell in with and defeated the flotilla,
destroying the whole. Having advanced to within sixteen miles of
ton, and ascertaining the force of the enemy to be such as might au
attempt at carrying his capital, I determined to make it, and accord
the troops in movement on the evening of the 23d. A corps of al
men appeared to oppose us, but retired after firing a few shots. On th
troops resumed their march, and reached Bladensburgh, a village s
the left bank of the eastern branch of the Potowmack, about five m
Washington.

On the opposite side of that river, the enemy was discovered stro
ed on very commanding heights, formed in two lines, his advance oc

fortified house, which with artillery covered the bridge over the eastern branch, across which the British troops had to pass. A broad and straight road leading from the bridge to Washington, ran through the enemy's position, which was carefully defended by artillery and riflemen.

The disposition for the attack being made, it was commenced with so much impetuosity by the light brigade, consisting of the 85th light infantry and the light infantry companies of the army, under the command of Colonel Thornton, that the fortified house was shortly carried, the enemy retiring to the higher grounds.

In support of the light brigade, I ordered up a brigade under the command of Colonel Brooke, who with the 44th regiment attacked the enemy's left, the 4th regiment pressing his right with such effect, as to cause him to abandon his guns. His first line giving way, was driven on the second, which, yielding to the irresistible attack of the bayonet, and the well directed discharge of rockets, got into confusion, and fled, leaving the British masters of the field. The rapid flight of the enemy, and his knowledge of the country, precluded the possibility of many prisoners being taken, more particularly as the troops had, during the day, undergone considerable fatigue.

The enemy's army, amounting to 8 or 9000 men, with 3 or 400 cavalry, was under the command of General Winder, being formed of troops drawn from Baltimore and Pennsylvania. His artillery, ten pieces of which fell into our hands, was commanded by Commodore Barney, who was wounded and taken prisoner. The artillery I directed to be destroyed.

Having halted the army for a short time, I determined to march upon Washington, and reached that city at eight o'clock that night. Judging it of consequence to complete the destruction of the public buildings with the least possible delay, so that the army might retire without loss of time, the following buildings were set fire to and consumed. The Capitol, including the Senate House and House of Representatives, the Arsenal, the Dock-yard, Treasury, War Office, President's Palace, Rope-walk, and the great Bridge across the Potowmack: in the dock-yard, a frigate nearly ready to be launched, and a sloop of war, were consumed. The two bridges leading to Washington over the eastern branch had been destroyed by the enemy, who apprehended an attack from that quarter. The object of the expedition being accomplished, I determined, before any greater force of the enemy could be assembled, to withdraw the troops, and accordingly commenced retiring on the night of the 25th.

On the evening of the 29th we reached Benedict, and reembarked the following day. In the performance of the operation I have detailed, it is with the utmost satisfaction I observe to your Lordship, that cheerfulness in undergoing fatigue, and anxiety for the accomplishment of the object, were conspicuous in all ranks.

To Sir Alexander Cochrane my thanks are due for his ready compliance with every wish connected with the welfare of the troops and the success of the expedition.

To Rear-admiral Cockburn, who suggested the attack upon Washington, and who accompanied the army, I confess the greatest obligation for his cordial co-operation and advice.

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APPENDIX.

Extract of a Letter from Vice admiral the honourable Sir Alexander Cochrane, K. B. to J. W. Croker, Esq.

Tonnant, in the Patuxent, Sept. 2, 1814.

Sir.—I have the honour to acquaint you, for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, of the proceedings of his Majesty's combined sea and land forces, since my arrival with the fleet within the capes of Virginia; and I beg leave to offer my congratulations to their Lordships, upon the successful termination of an expedition, in which the whole of the enemy's flotilla under Commodore Barney has been captured or destroyed; his army, though greatly superior in number, and strongly posted with cannon, defeated at Bladensburgh—the city of Washington taken, the Capitol, with all the public buildings, military arsenals, dock-yard, and the rest of their naval establishments, together with a vast quantity of naval and military stores, a frigate of the largest class ready to launch, and a sloop of war afloat, either blown up or reduced to ashes.

Such a series of successes in the centre of the enemy's country, surrounded by a numerous population, could not be acquired without loss, and we have to lament the fall of some valuable officers and men; but considering the difficulties the forces had to contend with, the extreme heat of the climate, and coming into action at the end of a long march, our casualties are [illegible] few.

My letters of the 11th of August will have acquainted their Lordships with my waiting in the Chesapeak for the arrival of Rear-admiral Malcolm, with the expedition from Bermuda.

The Rear-admiral joined me on the 17th, and as I had gained information from Rear-admiral Cockburn, whom I found in the Potowmack, that Commodore Barney with the Baltimore flotilla had taken shelter at the head of the Patuxent, this afforded a pretext for ascending that river to attack him in its source, above Pig Point, while the ultimate destination of the combined force was Washington, should it be found that the attempt might be made with a prospect of success. To give their Lordships a more correct idea of the plan of attack, I send a sketch of the country upon which the movements of the navy and army are pourtrayed; by it their Lordships will observe that the best approach to Washington is by Port Tobacco upon the Potowmack, and Benedict upon the Patuxent, from both of which are direct and good roads to that city, and their distances nearly alike; the roads from Benedict divide about 5 miles inland; the one by Piscataway and Bladensburgh, the other following the course of the river, although at some distance from it, owing to the creeks that run up the country; this last passes through the towns of Nottingham and Marlborough to Bladensburgh, at which town the river called the eastern branch, that bounds Washington to the eastward, is fordable, and the distance is about five miles. There are two bridges over this river at the city; but it was not to be expected that the enemy would leave them accessible to an invading army.

Previously to my entering the Patuxent, I detached Captain Gordon of his Majesty's ship Seahorse, with that ship, and the ships and bombs named in the margin,* up the Potowmack, to bombard Fort Washington, (which is situated

* Euryalus, Devastation, Ætna, Meteor, Manby, and Erebus.

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